

Front Vol V The Visions in the Book of Revelations.

CAP. 1.

CAP. 2.

CAP. 3.



CAP. 4.

CAP. 5.

CAP. 6.



CAP. 7.

CAP. 8.

CAP. 9.



CAP. 10.

CAP. 11.

CAP. 12.



CAP. 13.

CAP. 14.

CAP. 15.



CAP. 16.

CAP. 17.

CAP. 18.



Handwritten signature or note at the bottom right of the page.

Front Vol V The Visions in the Book of Revelations.

CAP. 1.



CAP. 2.



CAP. 3.



CAP. 4.



CAP. 5.



CAP. 6.



CAP. 7.



CAP. 8.



CAP. 9.



CAP. 10.



CAP. 11.



CAP. 12.



CAP. 13.



CAP. 14.



CAP. 15.



CAP. 16.



CAP. 17.



CAP. 18.



Handwritten signature or note at the bottom right of the page.

A N
E X P O S I T I O N
O F T H E
N E W T E S T A M E N T,

Both DOCTRINAL and PRACTICAL:

IN WHICH IS INSERTED

- I. A correct Copy of the Sacred Text, and the Genuine Sense thereof given;
- II. The Truths of the Christian Religion are set in a plain and clear Light;
- III. Difficult Places explained;
- IV. Seeming Contradictions reconciled; and
- V. Whatever is Material in the Various Readings, and the several Oriental Versions, is Observed.

THE WHOLE

Illustrated and Confirmed from the most Ancient JEWISH WRITINGS.

By *John Gill* D.D.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

VOL. V.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR GEORGE KEITH, IN GRACECHURCH-STREET.

MDCCLXXVI.

1776

EXPOSITION

NEW TESTAMENT

BOTH DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE



By JOHN GILL, M.D.

IN A NEW EDITION CORRECTED

VOL. V.

LONDON

GEORGE SMITH & CO.

E X P O S I T I O N OF THE N E W T E S T A M E N T.

The Epistle of P A U L the Apostle to the H E B R E W S.

THAT this epistle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who took whole sentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as Eusebius (a) observes: it has been denied to be authentic by some heretics, as the Marcionites and Arians, but has been generally received as such by the orthodox; some indeed doubted of it, because it was not received by the Roman church, as an epistle of the apostle Paul (b); though others, who have thought it was not his, as Origen, yet looked upon it as genuine (c). It has been ascribed to different persons, as to Barnabas, to Apollos, to Luke the Evangelist, and to Clement of Rome, but without any just reason. Clement of Alexandria, a very ancient writer, asserts it to be the apostle Paul's (d); and his name stands in the title of it, in all R. Stephens's exemplars, and in all Beza's copies, excepting one, and so it does in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions: and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other epistles of his; compare chapter i. 2, 3. with *Col.* i. 15, 16. and chapter v. 12, 13, 14. with *1 Cor.* iii. 1, 2. and chapter xii. 1. with *1 Cor.* ix. 24. and chapter xiii. 7, 17. with *1 Thess.* v. 11, 12. and chapter xiii. 9. with *Eph.* iv. 14. and chapter xiii. 18. with *2 Cor.* i. 12. and chapter xiii. 20. with *Rom.* xv. 13. and chapter xvi. 20. *1 Thess.* v. 23. and many other places; and also from the order and method of it, first treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhortations, which is the common form of Paul's epistles: to which may be added various circumstances; as that it was written from Italy, where Paul was a prisoner; and the mention the author of it makes

of

(a) *Eccl. Hist.* l. 3, c. 38.(b) *Ibid.* c. 3. & l. 6. c. 20.(c) *Ibid.* l. 6, c. 25.(d) *Ibid.* c. 14.

of his bonds, and of Timothy, as well known unto him, who was Paul's companion; besides, the token of his epistles appears in this, namely, his usual salutation to the churches; see chapter xiii. 23—25. But above all, the testimony of the apostle Peter is greatly in favour of its being his, *2 Pet.* iii. 15, 16. from whence it clearly appears, that the apostle Paul did write an epistle to the Hebrews; for to them Peter wrote; see *1 Pet.* i. 1. *2 Pet.* iii. 1. and what epistle could it be but this? and what Peter refers to is to be found in it; see chapter x. 25, 36, 37. and which is written with great wisdom; in none of Paul's epistles is there a greater discovery of his knowledge of divine mysteries, than in this; and in it also are things hard to be understood, chapter v. 11. The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diversity of its stile, and the author of it seeming to be not an apostle, but a disciple of the apostle's. As to his not setting his name to it, the reasons might be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not so much of the Jews; and because of the prejudice of the Jews against him, both believers and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the usefulness of it to the one, and have stirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of stile, different subjects require a different stile; and yet in many things there is a likeness, as before observed: and as to the author's not being an apostle, which is concluded from chapter ii. 3. the word *us* there is to be understood of the believing Hebrews, the disciples of the apostle, and not inclusive of the author, by a figurative way of speaking often used by Paul; and besides, the apostle received a confirmation of the Gospel from Ananias, who might have been an hearer of Christ, though he was at first taught it by Christ himself; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and when several of the apostles were living, and therefore he could never design by those words to put himself in a succeeding generation. The persons to whom this epistle was written were Hebrews, or Jews; so called, as some think, from the name of Abraham, the father of them; or, as others, from his passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Chaldea into Palestine. So Abraham the Hebrew, in *Gen.* xiv. 13. is by the Septuagint rendered, *ἁπαλῆς*, "one that passes over," taking it to come from the word עבר which signifies to *pass over*; with this compare *Josh.* xxiv. 3. and this is the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbins (*e*); though it seems rather that they were called so from Heber, who lived at the time of the confusion of languages; see *Gen.* x. 21. *Numb.* xxiv. 24. And this is the sense of many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, of Josephus (*f*), of Jonathan ben Uzziel (*g*), of R. Nehemiah (*h*), of Aben Ezra (*i*), and Kimchi (*k*), and others; see the note on *2 Cor.* xi. 22. And these were the Hebrews that dwelt in the land of Judea, and particularly at Jerusalem; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of those parts, but believers in Christ, who were embodied in a Gospel-church-state. It was a tradition of the ancients (*l*), that this epistle was written originally in Hebrew, and was translated into Greek, either by Luke the Evangelist, or by Clement of Rome. But for this there is no foundation; no Hebrew copy can be produced; Munster's edition of it in Hebrew, is a translation from the Greek, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the Jews; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Testament, which are made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Greek version; and besides, had it been wrote in Hebrew, the writer would not have interrupted the Hebrew words, *Melebizedek* and *Salem*, as he does, in chapter vii. 2. The time of its writing was before the destruction of Jerusalem, which in this book is signified by "the coming of the Lord," and "the day approaching;" and after Timothy was released from prison, and some time within the two years of his own imprisonment at Rome, when he hoped for a release, as his epistles to the Philippians, and to Philemon shew. Dr Lightfoot places it in the year sixty-two, and in the eighth of Nero. And the occasion and design of it is, to set forth the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men, to

Moses,

(e) Bereshit Rabba, §. 42. fol. 37. 3. Jarchi in *Gen.* x. 21. & xiv. 13.

Gen. x. 21.

(f) In Bereshit Rabba, §. 42. fol. 37. 3.

Shorathim, rad. 127.

(g) Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* l. 6. c. 14.

(h) Antiq. l. 1. c. 6. §. 4.

(i) Targum in

(j) In *Gen.* x. 21. & in *Jonam*, 1. 9.

(k) Sopher

(l) Hieronymi Catalog. Script. *Eccles.* §. 15. fol. 91. tom. 1.

Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, and his sons, and the preferableness of his priesthood and sacrifice, to the Levitical priesthood, and its sacrifices; to teach the Hebrews the true knowledge of the mysteries of their law; to point out to them the design, use, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and persecutions they would be called to endure for Christ; and to exhort them to perseverance, and to strengthen them against apostasy, as well as to instruct them in the various duties of religion.

CHAP. I.

The intention of this epistle being to demonstrate the superior excellency of the Gospel-revelation to the legal one, the apostle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and observes that in other things they differ. The revelation under the Law was made in times past, the Gospel revelation in these last days; the former was made to the Jewish fathers, that were of old, the latter to the then present apostles; the one was made at sundry times, and divers manners, the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own Son, *1. 1, 2.* and therefore the latter must be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the Son of God, with respect to his person, office, and glory; shewing that he is heir of all things, the maker of the worlds, of the same nature and glory with his Father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the high priest of his people, who has made satisfaction for their sins, and purged them from them, and is now at the right hand of God, *1. 2, 3.* He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and these supported by testimonies from the scriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, *1. 4, 5.* which is proved from *Psalms ii. 7. 2 Sam. vii. 12—16.* that he is the object of the worship of angels, *1. 6.* which is required of them, *Psalms xcvi. 7.* that he is their maker and creator, *1. 7.* which appears from *Psalms civ. 4.* that he has an everlasting kingdom, is a righteous king, and is richly anointed above his fellows, *1. 8, 9.* which is the sense of some passages in *Psalms xlv. 6, 7.* and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they shall not, *1. 10—12.* which is confirmed by testimonies out of *Psalms cii. 25—27.* that he sits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, *1. 13.* as is clear from *Psalms cx. 1.* and besides, the angels, as they are ministers made by him, they

are sent out from him to wait on his people, the heirs of salvation, and minister to them, and therefore he must be greater than they, *1. 14.*

GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners] The apostle begins the epistle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times: the author of this revelation is God, not essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as distinguished from his Son in the next verse; for the revelation under the Old Testament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatsoever else they differ: and this revelation was made at several times, at different seasons, and to different persons; and consisted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worship, and concerning the Messiah, his person and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual discoveries made, both before and after the giving of the Law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the first promise, and in the times of the patriarchs, of Moses, David, Isaiah, and other prophets; and this was delivered in various manners; sometimes by angels; sometimes in a dream; at other times by a vision; and sometimes by Urim and Thummim: and this he

Spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets] By Moses, and other succeeding prophets, as David, Isaiah, Jeremy, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and others; who were sent to the Jewish fathers, the ancestors of the people of the Jews, to whom they prophesied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inspired by the holy Ghost: and the apostle suggests, by this way of speaking, that it was a long time since God spake to this people; for prophecy had ceased ever since the times of Malachi, for the space of three hundred years; and this time past includes the whole Old Testament dispensation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir

heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son] This is the Gospel-revelation, or the revelation in the Gospel-dispensation; which though it comes from the same author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general design of this epistle is to shew the superior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time past, but this *in these last days*: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and several other copies, read, "in the last of these days;" perfectly agreeable to the phrase, *באחרית הימים* used in *Gen. xlix. 1. Num. xxiv. 14. Isa. ii. 2.* to which the apostle refers, and in which places, the days of the Messiah are intended; and it is a rule with the Jews (*m*), that wherever the phrase, *the last days*, is mentioned, the days of the Messiah are designed: and they are to be understood not of the last days of the natural world, but of the Jewish world and state; indeed, the times of the Messiah, or Gospel-dispensation, may be called *the last days* of the natural world, according to the tradition of the house of Elias; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be six thousand years, and divides it into three parts, the last of which is assigned to the Messiah, thus; two thousand years void, (or without the Law) two thousand years the Law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah (*n*): but it is best to understand this of the last days of the Mosaic economy, or Jewish dispensation; for the Messiah was to come before the Jewish civil and church-states were dissolved; before the scepter departed from Judah, and before the second temple was destroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the close of both these states; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, *Hab. ii. 3. Heb. ix. 26. 1 Cor. x. 11.* and quickly after Jesus, the true Messiah was come, an end was put to both these: from whence it may be observed, that the Messiah must be come; that the Mosaic economy, and Jewish worship, will never be restored again; that the Gospel-revelation being made in the last days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the last revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this respect, that was made to the fathers, this *to us*; meaning either the apostles in particular, or the Jews in general, to whom the apostle is writing: this shews that the Gospel-revelation was first made to the Jews; and it being made to them personally,

they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not cast off his people; and that though he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had shewed greater favour to them, having provided some better thing for them: and there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piecemeal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the Father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, *by his Son*; who is so not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own Son, his proper Son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a Son, and not a servant, in whom the Father is, and he in the Father, and in whom the Spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate; and what he says from God should be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and because of the authority he came with as Mediator.

Whom he hath appointed heir of all things] Which must be understood of him, not as God and Creator; for as such he has a right to all things; all that the Father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the former and maker of all things; but as mediator, who has all things committed to him, to subserve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again: the word *all* may refer either to persons or things; to persons, not angels, good or bad, though both are subject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to these persons, and for their use and service, in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all spiritual ones, the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and eternal glory and happiness, the saints inheritance, who are joint-heirs with Christ.

By whom also he made the worlds] This is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, and their way of speaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the *upper world*, (the habitation of God) the *middle world*, (the air) and

(m) Kimchi & Aben Ezra in *Isa. ii. 2.*

(n) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1.

and the lower world (o), (the earth); and sometimes they call them the world of angels, (where they dwell) the world of orbs, (where the sun, moon, and stars are) and the world below (p), (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer-books (q), to call God, רבון כל העולמים "Lord of all worlds;" see the note on chapter xi. 3. These God made by his Son, not as an instrument, but as an efficient cause with him; for by him were all things made, whether visible or invisible; and the preposition by does not always denote instrumentality, but sometimes efficiency; and is used of God the Father himself, and in this epistle, chapter ii. 10.

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Who being the brightness of his glory] Or of glory; of God the Father, the God of glory, and who is glory itself; so called on account of his glorious nature and perfections: and because of the glorious manifestations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various dispensations of his grace, and especially in his Son; and because he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Christ, as man and mediator, and in his own people. Now Christ is the brightness of this, as he is God; he has the same glorious nature and perfections, and the same glorious names, as *Jebovah*, the Lord of glory, &c. and the same glory, homage, and worship given him: the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray; so some render it, "the ray of his glory;" and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another: so the phrase, כְּרִיזָה "the brightness of his glory," is used of the divine being, in the Chaldee paraphrases (r); see *Wisdom* vii. 26.

And the express image of his person] This intends much the same as the other phrase; namely, equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons; for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he cannot be the express image and character of him; see the note on *Col.* i. 15.

And upholding all things by the word of his power] The Syriac version renders it, "by the power of his word," to the same sense, only inverting the words. The Targumist on 2 *Chron.* ii. 6. uses a phrase very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; because, adds he, כִּבְלֵי בְרִיָּה גְבוּרָתוֹ "he bears, or sustains all things by the arm of his power:" and the words are to be understood not of the Father, upholding all things by his essential and powerful word, his Son; but of the Son himself, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the universe; preserves every creature in its being, and supports it, and supplies it with the necessities of life; rules and governs all, and providentially orders and disposes of all things in the world, and that by his all-powerful will; which makes it manifest, that he is truly and properly God, and a very fit person to be a priest, as follows.

When he had by himself purged our sins] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions seem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Christ, made the expiation of sin, and then caused him to sit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them, which the priests under the law could not do: and when he had so done, he

Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high] By majesty is meant God the Father, to whom majesty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his right hand designates his power, greatness, and glory, and is expressive of the high honour Christ, as man, is possessed of; for his sitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead; and shews that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying rest and ease, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his session, as well as of the habitation of God, at whose right hand he sits, is on high, in the highest heavens.

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Being made so much better than the angels] Christ is so much better than the angels, as the creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that blesses, than he that is blessed; as he that is worshipped, than he that worships;

(a) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2, 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1.

(p) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 2. Caphtor, fol. 90. 1.

(q) Seder Tephillot, fol. 5. 2. & 40. 2. Ed. Amstelod.

(r) Targum in 2 Sam. xxii. 23. & in Cant. v. 10.

worships; as a king, than his subjects; as a master, than his servants; and as he that sends, than he that is sent: and Christ may be said to be made so, when he was manifested and declared to be so; and he was actually preferred to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the sins of his people, and when he was set down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verse, with which these words stand connected; for in his state of humiliation, and through his sufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none of them ever was, or ever will be: besides, the phrase *being made*, signifies no more than that *he was*; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and he was so much better than the angels;" and so the Ethiopic version, "he is so much better:" and this is observed, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, since he is preferred to the most excellent of creatures; and to shew, that the Gospel-dispensation is superior to the legal dispensation, which was introduced by the ministration of angels; and to take off the Jews from the worship of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, since it was the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be preferred to the angels; for in their ancient writings they say of him, he shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels (*s*): and that he is above them, appears from what follows,

As he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they] Which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in such a sense, as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verse: and though this name is not founded on his office, as mediator, but arises from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifest, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the discharge of his office, at his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and therefore he is said to *obtain it by inheritance*; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his possession for evermore.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

For unto which of the angels said he at any time] That is, he never said to any of the angels, what he has said to Christ; namely, what follows,

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee] For though angels are called the sons of God, Job i. 6. and chapters ii. 1. and xxxviii. 7. yet are never said to be begotten by him; or, with this clause annexed to it, *This day have I begotten thee*; nor are they ever so called in a proper sense, or in such sense as Christ is: this is said to Christ, and of him, in Psal. ii. 7. and that agreeable to the sense of the Jewish church at this time, or the apostle would never have produced it to the Hebrews in such a manner; and not only the whole psalm in general, but this verse in particular, is owned by Jewish writers (*t*), both ancient and modern, to belong to the Messiah. Christ is the Son of God, not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without father: nor to his office, as mediator, in which he is not a son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son, previous to his being a Prophet, Priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office, or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his divine person; for as in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, *to-day*, designs eternity, as in Isa. xliii. 13. which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as it is in Acts xiii. 33. see Rom. i. 4. and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ,

(*t*) Tanchuma apud, Holf. p. 321.

(*t*) Zohar in Num. fol. 82. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrim. c. 11. 1. & Abartinel, Mathmish Jeshuah, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1.

Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time, and case, more especially referred to here.

And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son] Which words are taken from 2 Sam. vii. 14. and the sense is, not that he should be his son by adoption; or that he would be instead of a father to him; or that he should be as dear to him as a son is to a father; but that he was really and properly so, and he would make it manifest, and own him as such, as he did at Jordan's river, upon the mount, and at his resurrection and ascension; though the words are spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, they properly belong to the antitype, who is greater than Solomon.

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten in the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world] By the *firstbegotten* is meant Christ. This is a name given him in the Old Testament, and is what the Hebrews were acquainted with, and therefore the apostle uses it; it is in *Psalms* lxxxix. 27. from whence it seems to be taken here, and which the ancient Jews (u) acknowledge is to be understood of the Messiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only-begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the first-born of every creature, *Col.* i. 15. and is sometimes stiled the *firstbegotten* from the dead; he rose the first in time, and is the first in causality and dignity; and he may be called the first-born, with respect to the saints, who are of the same nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, though they are not in the same class of sonship with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his second coming, for this seems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, "when he shall bring again," &c. that is, a second time, and from *Psalms* xcvi. from whence the following words are cited; and from the glory he shall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and minister to him; and not to his resurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; though as we read the words, they seem to regard his first coming into this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worshipped by them, according to the order of God the Father, as follows.

He saith, And let all the angels of God worship him] These words are cited from *Psalms* xcvi. 7. where the angels are called *Elohim*, Gods. So Aben Ezra on the place observes, that there are some (meaning their doctors) who say, that all the Gods are the angels; and Kimchi says, that the words are not imperative, but are in the past tense, instead of the future, "all the angels have worshipped him;" that is, they shall worship him; as they have done, so they will do. According to our version, they are called upon to worship God's first-born, his only begotten son, with a religious worship and adoration; even all of them, not one excepted; which shews that Christ, as the *firstbegotten*, is the Lord God; for he only is to be served and worshipped; and that if angels are to worship him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worshipped, and that Christ is preferable to them; and the whole sets forth the excellency and dignity of his person. Philo the Jew (w) often calls the *Logos*, or Word of God, his first-begotten.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

And of the angels he saith] Or "to the angels," as in the following verse, "to the Son," which stands opposed to this; and the words said to them, or of them, are found in *Psalms* civ. 4.

Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire] This cannot be understood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making these his messengers and ministers to do his will; for such a sense is not suitable to the scope of the *psalm* from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they stand; for it is not said, "he makes spirits or winds his angels," and flaming fire his ministers," but the reverse; and is contrary to the design of the apostle in citing them, which is to shew the superiority of Christ to angels, of whom it is said, that they are *made spirits*; they are *spirits*, created ones, and so differ from God the creator; they are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; they are immaterial, and so die not; they are spiritual substances subsisting in themselves; and they are *made* such by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jesus Christ, within the six days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be supposed, that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the Son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unless this is to be understood of the daily disposal

B of

(u) De Agricultura, p. 195. De Confal, Ling. p. 349, 351. De Somniis, p. 597.

of them in providence, in causing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some choose to supply the word with *as*, and read, "who maketh his angels as winds;" for invisibility, velocity, power, and penetration: "and his ministers as a flame of fire;" and these are the same with the angels, for they are ministers to God; they attend his presence; are ready to perform any service for him; they sing his praise, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are ministers to Christ; they attended at his incarnation; were solicitous for his preservation, ministered to him in distress, assisted at his resurrection, and accompanied him in his ascension, and will be with him at his second coming: and they are as a flame of fire; so called from their great power, force, and swiftness; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named Seraphim; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will descend in flaming fire, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven: angels sometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horses of fire, by which Elijah was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in such forms: so the Jews (x) say of the angels, "All the angels, their horses are horses of fire, and their chariots fire, and their bows fire, and their spears fire, and all their instruments of war fire." And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire (y).

& But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

But unto the Son he saith] What he does not to angels, and which sets him infinitely above them; which shews him to be a Prince and King, and not a servant, or minister; and which even ascribes deity to him.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever] This, with what follows in this verse, and the next, is taken out of *Psalms* xlv. 6, 7. which psalm is not spoken of Solomon, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much less a divine person, and the object of worship; but the Messiah, and so the ancient Jews understand it: the Targum applies it to him, and mentions him by name in *Y. 2.* and some of their modern writers (z) affirm, it is said of the Messiah; though Aben Ezra seems doubtful about it, saying, it is spoken concerning David, or Messiah his son, whose name is so,

Ezek. xxxvii. 25. Deity is here ascribed to the Son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, "Thy throne is the throne of God," or "thy throne is God;" or be supplied thus, "God shall establish thy throne." Nor are the words an apostrophe to the Father, but are spoken to the King, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the Father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed to the Son, who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for though the word *Elohim* is sometimes used of those who are not gods by nature; yet being here used absolutely, and the attributes of eternity and most perfect righteousness being ascribed to the person so called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reason why his throne is everlasting, and his sceptre righteous, and why he should be worshipped, served, and obeyed. Dominion, and duration of it, are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power and government, which is general; over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greatest among them, the kings and princes of the earth; and special, over his church and people; and which is administered by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his saints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he will sit forever: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he will have no successor in it, nor can his government be subverted; and though he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, it will not cease.

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom] The sceptre is an ensign of royalty; and a sceptre of righteousness, or rightness, is expressive of the justice of his government; the Syriac version renders it, "a sceptre stretched out;" which is a sceptre of mercy, as the instance of Ahasuerus stretching out his sceptre to Esther shews; and such is the Gospel of Christ, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men through Christ; and which may be called a sceptre of righteousness, since it reveals and directs to the righteousness of Christ, and encourages to works of righteousness; but here it designates the righteous administration of Christ's kingly office; for just and true are, have been, and ever will be, his ways, as king of saints.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God,

(x) Sopher Jetsirah, p. 26. Ed. Rittangel. (y) T. Hieros. Rosshahans, fol. 58, 1. (z) Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. & R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49, 2.

God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

[Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity] Christ loves righteous persons and righteous works, faithfulness and integrity, and a just administration of government; every thing that is holy, just, and good; which has appeared in the whole course of his life on earth, in working out a righteousness for his people, and in encouraging righteousness in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of justice will still more appear at the last day, when he will judge the world in righteousness, and give the crown of righteousness to proper persons: and he hates iniquity; or "unrighteousness," as the Alexandrian copy, and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing against it, and dehorting from it; by his severity exercised towards delinquents; by his suffering for it, and abolishing of it; and by chastizing his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will still more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, professors and profane, will be bid to depart from him.

[Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows] The anointer is the God of Christ; that is, God the Father, who is the God of Christ, as man; and is so called, because he prepared and formed the human nature of Christ, and supported it under all its sufferings, and has glorified it; and as such Christ prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the Anointed is the Son of God, the Son spoken to, and is called God in the preceding verse; though he is not anointed as God, but as Mediator, to be Prophet, and Priest, and King: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but spiritual, the holy Ghost, as it is explained in *Acts* x. 38. called *the oil of gladness*, in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of the guests; and because of the spiritual effects of joy and gladness, both on Christ, as man, and on his people. Now Christ was anointed as Mediator from all eternity; that is, he was invested with his office as such; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the holy Ghost; who also descended on him at his baptism, after which he went about doing good, and healing diseases; but here it seems to refer to the time of his ascension, when he was declared to be Lord and Christ, the Anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulness of the Spirit without measure, and with which he was anointed *above his fellows*: by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the kings and

princes of the earth; but the saints, who are so called, because they are of the same nature, and are of the same family, and are partakers of the same Spirit and grace; and having received the unction from him, are also kings, priests, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reason of his being anointed; or exalted, and made Lord and Christ, is because he loves righteousness; see *Phil.* ii. 7, 8. or rather, because he is anointed with the holy Spirit without measure, therefore he loves righteousness; for the words may be rendered, "thou lovest righteousness—because God, thy God, hath anointed thee."

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

[And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth] The person here addressed, as the Lord or *Jehovah*, and as the maker of the heavens and the earth, is the same with the Son spoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the speech to him, though they are taken from another psalm, from *Psalms* cii: 25—27. The phrase, *thou Lord*, is taken from *Ps.* 12. and is the same with, *O my God*, *Ps.* 24. and whereas it is there said, *of old*, and here, *in the beginning*, the sense is the same; and agreeable to the Septuagint, and the apostle; *Jarchi* interprets it by, *מֵרִישׁוֹ* "at, or from the beginning;" and so the Targum paraphrases it, *מֵרִישׁוֹ* "from the beginning," that the creatures were created, &c. that is, in the beginning of the creation, which is the apostle's meaning; and shews the eternity of Christ, the Lord, the Creator of the earth, who must exist before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the founding of it, shews that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the stability of it; and points out the wisdom of the creator in laying such a foundation; and proves the Deity of Christ, by whom that and all things in it were made.

[The heavens are the works of thine hands] There are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created in the beginning, as the earth was, *Gen.* i. 1. and are the immediate work of Christ; they were made by himself, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till these were made; nor by any intermediate help which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phrase is expressive of the power of Christ in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wisdom in garnishing them, in

which there is a wonderful display of his glory; and the whole serves to set forth the dignity and excellency of his person.

11 They shall perish: but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

They shall perish] That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the substance of them, but as to the quality of them; the present form and fashion of them shall pass away; the curse will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the substance of them will continue; otherwise there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked.

But thou remainest] Without any change or alteration, neither in his natures, divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as Mediator; as a priest, he has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession; as a king, his kingdom is an everlasting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he will be the everlasting light of his people.

They all shall wax old as doth a garment] Garments in time wax old, and lose their beauty and usefulness, unless when a miracle is wrought, as in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, *Psalms* civ. 2. and these, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of usefulness, in the present form of them; see *Isaiah* li. 6.

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up] In order to lay them aside, and make no use of them in the manner they now are; just as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of fashion, are folded up, and laid aside from use at present, or are put into another form. In the Hebrew text it is, "as a vesture shalt thou change them;" but the sense is the same, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeable to which Jarchi interprets the Hebrew phrase thus, "as a man turns his garment to put it off;" the Vulgate Latin version reads as the Hebrew does, and one of the manuscripts of New College, Oxford.

And they shall be changed] As to their form and use, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things.

But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail] Which is expressive of the immutability of Christ

in his nature and perfections, in his person and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in opposition to the fading and transitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may serve to take off the heart from the one, and set it upon the other; and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and encourage us to expect a continuance of blessings from him; all supplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

But to which of the angels said he at any time] That is, he never said to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never designed to give them any such honour, as hereafter expressed; he never promised it to them, or bestowed it on them; he never called up any of them to so high a place, or to such a dignity.

Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool] Yet this he said to his Son, *Psalms* cx. 1. for to him, the Messiah, are they spoken, and have had their fulfilment in him; see the note on *Matthew* xxii. 44. and therefore he must be greater than the angels.

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Are they not all ministering spirits] Servants to God, to Christ, and to his people, and therefore must be inferior to the Son of God. The phrase is Rabbinical; frequent mention is made in Jewish writings (a) of מלאכי השמים "the angels of ministry, or the ministering angels;" this is their common appellation with the Jews; and the apostle writing to such, uses a like phrase, well known to them, and appeals to them, if the angels were not such spirits.

Sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation] The persons they minister to, and for, are those, who shall be heirs of salvation; that is, of eternal glory, which will be possessed by the saints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this shews, that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happiness:

(a) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. & 14. 1. 2. & 16. 1. T. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. & Megilla, fol. 15. 2. & in Zohar passim.

happiness: and of this the saints are heirs now; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "who are heirs of salvation;" nor should it be rendered, "who shall be heirs," but rather, "who shall inherit salvation;" for this character respects not their heirship, but their actual inheriting of salvation: and the ministry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and spiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their souls; in things temporal, in which they have often been assisting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diseases, in directing and preserving them in journeys, in saving and delivering them from outward calamities, in restraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in destroying their enemies; in things spiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and suggesting good things to them, and in helping and assisting them against Satan's temptations; and they are present with their departing souls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the last day. And they are *sent forth* to minister to them in such a way; they are sent forth by Christ, the Lord and Creator of them, who therefore must be superior to them; they do not take this office upon themselves, though being put into it, they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Christ: and this shews the care of Christ over his people, and his kindness to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint such to minister to them; and since they are of so much use and service, they ought to be respected and esteemed, though not worshipped.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apostle, from the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel-revelation is come, discoursed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, lest those things should be let slip, and be lost, *ψ. 1.* and then, by another argument from the less to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broke with impunity, then how should such escape divine punishment that neglected and despised the Gospel, which is a doctrine of salvation, was delivered by the Lord himself, and confirmed by various testimonies and miracles, *ψ. 2., 3., 4.* And besides, the Gospel-dispensation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Christ, to whom all things are subject, which is proved out of *Psal. viii. 4, 5, 6.* and which proof shews,

that though Christ, on account of his sufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are subject to him, since all things are, *ψ. 5—9.* And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence against what the apostle had asserted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the superiority of Christ to angels; and this leads him on to observe the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, and also of his incarnation; that the moving cause of Christ's sufferings and death, was the grace and good-will of God; that he did not suffer for himself, but for others, for every one of those described in the context; that inasmuch as he was the surety of those persons, it was agreeable to the justice of God, and it could not be otherwise, but he must be made perfect through suffering; and this was the way to bring many sons to glory, *ψ. 9, 10.* and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was necessary, that the sanctifier and the sanctified might be of the same nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, *ψ. 11—13.* as he does, for which are cited, *Psal. xxii. 22.* and *Psal. xviii. 2.* *Isaiah viii. 18.* and because the children he engaged to bring to glory were partakers of flesh and blood; and also that he might be capable of dying, and by dying destroy the devil, and deliver his timorous people, who, through fear of death, lived in a continual state of bondage, *ψ. 14, 15.* for which reason he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, *ψ. 16.* And besides, it was necessary he should be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a state and condition capable of sympathizing with them, and succouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by suffering through temptation himself, *ψ. 17, 18.*

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed This is an inference from the apostle's discourse in the preceding chapter; since he, by whom God has spoke in these last days, is his Son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worshippers of him, and ministers to him, and his; therefore the greater regard should be had to the Gospel spoken by him: even

To the things which we have heard] Which are no other than the truths of the Gospel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the apostles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Christ himself, and were what their forefathers had desired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Gospel. Now it becomes the hearers of it, to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a close consideration of Gospel truths, a diligent inquiry into them, a valuable esteem of them, a strict adherence to them, and a watchfulness to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done more earnestly than their forefathers had, or than they themselves had; or this may be put for the superlative degree, and signify, that they should give the most earnest heed; for they had the most abundant reason to give heed, since what they heard was not from Moses and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Christ the Son of God, who was greater than they.

Left at any time we should let them slip] And this either respects persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "left we should run out;" and the Syriac version, "left we should fall;" and the Arabic version, "left we should fall from honesty;" which may intend partial slips and falls, to which the people of God are subject; and which are oftentimes owing to inadvertency to the word; for the Gospel, duly attended to, is a preservative from falling: or it may respect things, even the doctrines of the Gospel, left we should let them slip out of us, through us, or besides us: the metaphor seems to be taken either from leaking vessels, which let out what is put into them; or to strainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and so becomes useless; and which is expressive of unprofitable hearing of the word, through inattention, negligence and forgetfulness, and the irrecoverableness of it, when it is gone: the Gospel may be lost to some that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and some who hear the Gospel may be lost and perish; but the grace of the Gospel can never be lost.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast] This is a description of the law, from whence the apostle argues to a stricter regard to the Gospel, as

from the lesser to the greater: this is called *the word*, and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard, intreated they might hear no more; it was the word *spoken* with an articulate voice, and was heard by the Israelites, and it was spoken by angels. *Jehovah* the Father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thousand angels came along with him; and the ministry of these he used in the delivery of the law; by them he spoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the disposition of them; see *Acts* vii. 53. *Gal.* iii. 19. To which agree those words of Herod, spoken to the Jews, recorded by Josephus (b); that we learn of God, δι' αγγέλων "by angels;" the best of doctrines, and the most holy things in the law. And this was *steadfast*; firm, and sure, being the word of God, which cannot pass away, until it be fulfilled: it was confirmed by terrible signs attending it, and by the peoples assent unto it; the penalty of it is sure and certain, in case of disobedience; and as to the form and ministration of it, it remained until Christ, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, so far as of a moral nature, it still remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is abolished, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it, and with respect to justification by it; but it still continues as a cursing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to sinners in the hands of the Spirit; and as a rule of walk and conversation to saints, as in the hands of Christ.

And every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward] Every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was punished as that penalty required; and that according to the strict justice of God, and the just demerit of sin; and none escaped, but suffered the punishment due to the violation of the precept either in themselves, or in their surety; so steadfast and immoveable was this law.

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

How shall we escape] The righteous judgment of God, and eternal punishment.

If we neglect so great salvation] As the Gospel is, which is called *salvation*, in opposition to the Law, which is the ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ;

(b) Antiq. l. 15. c. 5. §. 3.

Christ; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in conversion, and so is the power of God unto it: and it is a great salvation; the Gospel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Christ; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great success; and has in it great things, great mysteries, and exceeding great and precious promises: and the salvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wisdom; it is wrought by a great person, by a Saviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our Saviour; it has been procured at great charge and expence, even at the expence of the blood and life of the Son of God; and has been obtained through great difficulties; and is the salvation of the soul, the more noble part of man; and it is a compleat and everlasting one: to neglect this, is to be careless of it; to contemn it, and to despise the ministers of it; and to make any thing else but Christ the way of salvation: and the danger such are in is very great; it is not possible that they should escape divine vengeance, since their sin is so great, and attended with such aggravating circumstances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wisdom of God in providing such a Saviour, and a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and beside that there is no more sacrifice for sin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniscient and omnipotent, and there will be no escaping out of his hands: to which must be added, that this Gospel of salvation is that

Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord] By the Lord Jesus Christ himself; the Gospel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he spake it as never man did: it was preached by John indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, and to Abraham before them, and even to Adam in Eden's garden, which was the first time it was spoken; but then it was spoken to him by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, the Son of God, as the ancient Chaldee paraphrases, which express the sense of the old Jewish church, shew (c): besides, it began most fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his flesh, so as it never was preached before, nor since; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth, came by him, in all their fulness and glory.

And was confirmed unto us by them that heard him] The Gospel is in itself firm and stable; nor did the words of Christ need any confirmation, who

is truth itself, the Amen, and faithful witness; but in condescension to human weakness, and by reason that Christ, as man, was not every where, and that by the mouth of more witnesses it should be established, he sent forth his apostles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they published it to the Jews first, as these were to whom the apostle writes, and then to the Gentiles. And though the apostle had it first by revelation from Christ himself, Gal. i. 11, 12. it was confirmed to him by Ananias.

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own will?

God also bearing them witness] The apostles of Christ; God testifying to their mission and commission, and the truth of the doctrine they preached.

Both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles] Such as taking up serpents without hurt, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, and raising the dead, and casting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Gospel preached by them: a sign, wonder, or miracle, for these signify the same thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the sole author of miracles; and they were done in the first ages of christianity, when they were necessary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to establish men in it; and these were various, as before observed.

And gifts of the holy Ghost] Such as, besides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, discerning of spirits, speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, 1 Cor. xii. 8—10.

According to his own will] Either according to the will of God, who bore testimony by these miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the holy Spirit, who distributed them to men severally as he pleased, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

For unto the angels] Though angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former dispensation in messages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them

Hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak] By which is meant, not the future

(c) Targum Onkelos & Jon. in Gen. iii. 8. & Hieron. in v. 9.

future state of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, as opposed to this world, and the present state of things; though there may be much truth in this sense, as that the present world is in subjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the present world is much in subjection, though it is not put into subjection to evil angels, who usurp a power over it; hence Satan is called the god and prince of this world; and it is in some sense in subjection to good angels, as they are used by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and assisting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the special care of his own people: but the world to come, as opposed to this, is not at all subject to them; they are employed in carrying the souls of departed saints thither, and shall be with them there, and join with them in their service; but they will not be as kings, nor even as children, but as servants; much less is heaven at their dispose to give to whomsoever they please; it is only in this sense in subjection to Christ, the prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given to him. But it is not of this world the apostle is speaking: he is speaking of something now, which bears this name, and in proof of it, cites a passage out of *Psalms* viii. where mention is made of sheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it designs the new heavens and new earth at the resurrection, and day of judgment, for these will not be put in subjection to angels; though of these the apostle is not speaking in the context: it seems therefore to intend the Gospel, and the Gospel-dispensation and church-state, in opposition to the Jewish state, and legal dispensation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly sanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Christ came; and then another world took place, here called *the world to come*, as the times of the Messiah are frequently called by the Jews, עולם הבא "the world to come," the Gospel-dispensation, the apostle was treating of in the preceding verses, in distinction from the law, the word spoken by angels; for the Gospel was not spoken by them, but by the Lord: the Gospel state is very properly the world to come, with respect to the Old-Testament saints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are past away, and all things are become new; angels desire to look into the mysteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; but not they, but men are the dispensers of the doctrines of it; and Christ he is the Head, King, Governor, and Father of

this new world: so instead of "everlasting Father," the Septuagint render the clause in *Ira.* ix. 6. πατήρ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, "the Father of the age, or world to come;" and hence mention is made in the Jewish writings, of משיח בן עמרם "the world to come of the Messiah (d)."

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

But one in a certain place testified] That is, David, for he is the penman of the psalm out of which the following words are taken; and though his name is not mentioned by the apostle, nor the particular place or the psalm pointed at, as in *Acts* xiii. 33, 35. yet this was not through ignorance of either, nor out of disrespect to the penman; but because the apostle is writing to Jews, who were conversant with the scriptures, and knew full well who said the words, and where they were: and it is usual with the Jews to cite passages in this manner; and the form by which the passage is introduced, by the word *testified*, is quite agreeable to their way of citing scripture, of which there is another instance in chapter vii. 17. and I think that this form is only used in this epistle to the Hebrews, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to say, חזקו חזקו "the law testified (e)," as it is said in such or such a place; and here the apostle produces a passage, as a witness and testimony of the truth of what he had said, that the Gospel-dispensation is not put in subjection to angels, but to the Messiah: the passage stands in *Psalms* viii. 4. which psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah, as appears from the inapplication of it to others; and from the application of a passage in it to the children in his time, *Matt.* xxi. 16. by Christ himself, and of the passage here by the apostle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the psalm begins and concludes.

Saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? This is not to be understood of mankind in general; nor of man in a state of innocence: there were no babes nor sucklings in paradise, nor enemies to restrain. *Enosh*, the word for man, signifies a frail mortal man, which Adam then was not; nor could he be called the son of man;

(d) Targum in 1 Kings iv. 33.

(e) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 37. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Yefode Hattorah, 3. 7. §. 6. & Melachim, 1. 11. §. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra in Lev. xvi. 8.

nor can it so well suit with him, to be said to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not subjected unto him; but of Christ, with whom every thing agrees, as the name by which he is called, *Enosh*, a frail man; for he was a man encompassed with infirmities; of no note and esteem among men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; was subject to death, and did die; and is often called *the son of man*: what is said of him, suits with him, as that God was *mindful of him*; which may be expressive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine person; and of his counsel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his person; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unction of it, and of his great regard to it in its sufferings, by supporting it, and in raising it from the dead: and also that he *visited* him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his presence, with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, with divine supports, and spiritual peace and joy; all which in itself it was not deserving of, nor could it claim; and therefore these things are spoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels] In the Hebrew text it is, "than Elohim," which some render, *than God*; but is rightly rendered by the apostle, "than angels;" and so the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it. Christ was made a little lower than the angels, through the assumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, especially the corporal part of it, and in this Kimchi makes the lessening to be; and more especially as that was assumed by Christ with the infirmities of it; and by reason of the straits and indigencies he was brought into in it; besides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to some parts of which they are not subject; and sometimes he stood in need of the ministry and support of angels, and had it; particularly he was made *lower* than they, when he was deprived of the gracious presence of God, and in the time of his sufferings and death; and which seem chiefly to be respected, as appears from y. 9. and the word *little* may not so much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, "a little

Vol. V.

"while;" in which sense it is used in *Acts* v. 34. as the Hebrew word *עַלְיוֹן* is in *Psalms* xxxvii. 10. and so may respect the time of his suffering death; and at most the time from his incarnation to his resurrection; for he could not continue long in this low estate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but must rise, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made so low by God, *Jehovah* the Father, whose name is excellent in all the earth, *Psalms* viii. 1. he pre-ordained him to this low estate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death; though neither of these were contrary to his will.

Thou crownedst him with glory and honour] With that glory he had with the Father before the world was, and which followed upon his sufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his resurrection had it; and he is ascended on high, where he has the honour to sit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, though once for a while below them, and they are now subject to him.

And didst set him over the works of thy hands] Over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it; and made him higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is not put under him*. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet] Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and sea; see *1 Peter* iii. 22.

For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him] There is no one person or thing that is not subject to Christ; the subjection is the most universal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or no, they are, and must be subject. God has left nothing but what he has put under his power.

But now we see not yet all things put under him] This seems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before said; which may be removed, by observing, that though this general subjection is not seen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and though it is not as yet visible, yet it will be: and besides, the apostle's sense may be, that no such general subjection to any mere man has ever been seen and known; as not to

C

Solomon,

Solomon, nor Ahasuerus, nor Cyrus, nor Alexander the great, nor Julius, nor Augustus Cesar, nor any other; and this he may observe, to shew the inapplication of this passage to any but to Jesus Christ; and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

But we see Jesus] Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; "that he is Jesus," as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows.

Who was made a little lower than the angels] In his state of humiliation; see the note on *ψ*. 7.

For the suffering of death] This clause may be considered either as connected with the preceding; and then the sense is, that Jesus became lower than the angels, by, or through suffering death; in that respect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below them, and shewed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that because Jesus suffered death in the room and stead of his people; humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is

Crowned with glory and honour] See *Phil.* ii. 8, 9. and the note on *ψ*. 7.

That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man] That is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to *taste death*, is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; see the note on *Matt.* xvi. 28. and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days; and a corporal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one: and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, "that he by the grace of God might taste of every death;" which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the

context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his *grace*, free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to pre-ordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fulness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, "for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all;" Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead; and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word *man* is not in the original text, it is only, *ἡμεῖς* *ἡμῶν*, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered "for the whole;" that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, "for every one;" for every one of the sons God brings to glory, *ψ*. 10. for every one of the brethren whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, *ψ*. 11, 12. for every one of the members of the church, in the midst of which he sung praise, *ψ*. 12. for every one of the children God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, *ψ*. 13, 14. and for every one of the seed of Abraham in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, *ψ*. 16.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For it became him, for whom are all things] This is not a periphrasis of Christ who died, but of God the Father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cause of all things, in nature, and in grace; all things being made for his pleasure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cause of all things, as follows.

And by whom are all things] All the works of creation, providence, and grace.

In bringing many sons unto glory] Not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeserving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at present hid; is weighty, solid, durable, yea eternal: the persons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are *sons*; who are predestinated

predestinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the Spirit of God; believe in Christ; and have the spirit of adoption given them; and so being children, are heirs of glory: and these are *many*; for though they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, considered by themselves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Christ, and for whom he has given himself a ransom, and whom he justifies; and accordingly there are many mansions of glory provided for them in their Father's house, whose act it is to bring them thither: he has chosen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he sent his Son to redeem them; he reveals his Son in them, the hope of glory; he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and him it became

To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings] Christ is the captain of salvation, and is so called, because he is the author of it; and he is the prince and commander of these sons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their mansions of glory for them: and he is made perfect through sufferings; he suffered all that the law and justice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the sufferings of his people, and a perfect Saviour of them; and in this way went to glory himself: and it became God the Father, the first cause, and last end of all things, since he had a design to bring all his adopted sons to glory, that his own Son should perfectly suffer for them; this was agreeable to; and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, his veracity, his justice, grace, and mercy.

II For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

For both he that sanctifieth] Not himself, though this is said of him, *John xviii. 19.* nor his Father, though this also is true of him, *Isa. viii. 13.* but his people, the sons brought to glory, whose salvation he is the captain of; they are sanctified in him, he being made sanctification to them; and they have their sanctification from him, all their grace and holiness; and they are sanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their sins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his Spirit, working internal principles of grace and holiness in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate state, guilty and unclean.

And they who are sanctified] The sons brought

to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor so of themselves, they are made holy; all that are sons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: sanctification is absolutely necessary to their being brought to glory; and between the sanctifier and the sanctified there is a likeness, as there ought to be: they

Are all of one] They are both of one God and Father; Christ's God is their God, and his Father is their Father; they are of one body, Christ is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Christ is the surety, mediator, and messenger of it, and they share in all its blessings and promises; they are of one man Adam, Christ is a son of Adam, though not by ordinary generation, they descend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Christ has took part of the same flesh and blood with them.

For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren] Christ, and these sons that are sanctified, stand in the relation of brethren to each other; Christ is the first-born among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adversity, and one that sticks closer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Christ, who thereby became his peoples *Gaul*, or near kinsman, yea brother, *Cant. viii. 1.* and upon their adoption into his Father's family, which is made manifest by their regeneration, and by their doing his Father's will under the influence of his grace and Spirit, *Matt. xii. 49, 50.* and this relation Christ owns; he called his disciples brethren, when God had raised him from the dead, and given him glory: and so he will call all his saints, even the meanest of them, in the great day, *Matt. xxviii. 10.* and chap. *xxv. 40.* and he is not ashamed to do it; he does not disdain it, though he is God over all, and the Son of God, and is also in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which shows the wonderful condescension of Christ, and the honour that is put upon the saints; and may teach them not to despise the meanest among them: such a relation the Jews own will be between the Messiah and the Israelites. The Targumist on *Cant. viii. 1.* paraphrases the words thus; "When the king Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel, the children of Israel shall say unto him; 'Come, be thou with us, not for a brother, or be thou our brother.'" Nor can they say this will reflect any discredit upon Christ, when they make such a relation to be between God and them. The Israelites, they say (*f*), are called,

(f) Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & in Lev. fol. 3. 3. & 9. 3. & 32. 2.

called, אֱלֹהִים לְקָדוֹשׁ "the brethren of the holy "blessed God;" in proof of which they often produce *Psalms* cxxii. 8. as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting those words in *Lev.* xxv. 48. *One of his brethren may redeem him*; "This, say they (g), is the holy blessed "God."

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren] These words, with the following clause, are cited from *Psalms* xxii. 22. as a proof of what the apostle had before asserted; and that this psalm is to be understood, not of the Jewish nation, or people of Israel, nor of Esther, nor of David, but of the Messiah, appears from the title of it, *Mijeleth Shabar*, which signifies "the morning hind;" from the particular account of Christ's sufferings in it; from his several offices herein pointed to; from the conversion of the Gentiles it prophesies of; and from several passages cited from hence, and applied to Christ; see *Matthew* xxvii. 35, 39, 43, 46. And these are the words of Christ addressed to his Father; whose name he promises to declare to his brethren; meaning not the Jews, in general, his brethren according to the flesh; but his disciples and followers, particularly the twelve apostles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his resurrection; and indeed all the saints and people of God may be included: and by his *name* he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as *Elohim*, *El-shaddai*, *Jehovah*, or the like; but rather *he* himself, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only-begotten Son, lying in his bosom, has declared: though the Gospel seems chiefly to be designed; see *John* xvii. 6, 26. And this Christ declared with great exactness and accuracy, with clearness and perspicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he spoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his Father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expressive of Christ's prophetic office, of his preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers.

In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee] Or "a hymn;" this is to be understood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the synagogue of the Jews, but of the disciples of Christ, and of his singing an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the institution of the supper, *Matt.* xxvi. 30. for tho'

the number of the apostles was but small, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the Jews (b), ten men made a congregation.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

And again, I will put my trust in him] These words are taken not from *Isaiah* viii. 17. where, in the Septuagint version, is a like phrase; for they are not the words of the Messiah there, but of the prophet; and besides, the apostle disjoins them from the following words, which stand there, by saying, *and again*; but they are cited from *Psalms* xviii. 2. in which psalm are many things which have respect to the Messiah and his times; the person spoken of is said to be made the head of the heathen, to whom, unknown people yield a voluntary submission, and the name of God is praised among the Gentiles, *Ps.* 43, 49. The Targum upon it makes mention of the Messiah in *Ps.* 32. and he is manifestly spoken of under the name of David, in *Ps.* 50. and which verse is applied to the Messiah, by the Jews, both ancient and modern (i): and these words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the Spirit in him; and this of faith, and also of hope, very early appeared in him; he trusted in God for the daily supplies of life, and that he would help him in and through the work of man's salvation; see *Psalms* xxii. 9, 10. *Isaiah* l. 7, 8, 9. he committed his spirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raise his body from the dead; and he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people: and this is a citation pertinent to the purpose, shewing that Christ and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he must be man, since, as God, he could not be said to trust; and he must be a man of sorrows and distress, to stand in need of trusting in God.

And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me] This is a citation from *Isaiah* viii. 18. in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Israel, by the Assyrians, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promise of the Messiah, who is described as the Lord of hosts; who is to be sanctified, and be as a sanctuary to the saints, and as a stone of stumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and seal up the doctrine among the

(g) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 106. 3.

(b) Mifn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. §. 6.

(i) Echa Rabbati, fol.

50. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

the disciples; at which he seems astonished and concerned, but resolves to wait: upon which Christ, to encourage him, speaks these words; for they are not addressed to God, as the Syriac version renders them, "Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me, O God;" in which may be observed, that the saints are *children*, with respect to God, who has adopted them, and with respect to Christ, who is their everlasting Father; that they were given to Christ as his spiritual seed and offspring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Christ and his people are one, and that he is not ashamed to own them before God and men.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood] By the children are meant, not the children of this world, or the men of it; nor the children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; nor visible professors of religion; nor the apostles of Christ only; but all the children of God, the children given to Christ; all the sons that are brought to glory: these are *partakers of flesh and blood*; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is subject to infirmity and mortality; and the sense is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their state and case,

He also himself likewise took part of the same] Christ became man also, or assumed an human nature like theirs; this shews that he existed before his incarnation, who of himself, and by his own voluntary act, assumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine person, which is expressive of wondrous grace and condescension: Christ's participation of human nature, and the childrens, in some things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real flesh and blood they both partake of; that Christ's body is not spiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a complete, perfect human nature, and subject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Christ took his nature of a virgin, and is without sin; nor has it any distinct personality, but from the moment of its being subsisted in his divine person: and now the true reason of Christ's assuming such a nature, was on account of the children, which discovers great love to them, and shews that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence

they only share the special advantages of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was,

That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil] The devil is said to have the power of death, not because he can kill and destroy men at pleasure, but because he was the first introducer of sin, which brought death into the world, and so he was a murderer from the beginning; and he still tempts men to sin, and then accuses them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permission has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the second death. The apostle here speaks in the language of the Jews, who often call *Samael*, or Satan, מלאך המוות "the angel of death," in their Targums (*k*), Talmud (*l*), and other writings (*m*); and say, he was the cause of death to all the world; and ascribe much the same things to him, for which the apostle here so styles him: and they moreover say (*n*), that he will cease in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Messiah: and who, being come, has destroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruised his head, destroyed his works, disarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and saved those he would have devoured: and this he has done by death: "by his own death," as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; whereby he has abolished death itself, and sin the cause of it, and so Satan, whose empire is supported by it.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And deliver them who through fear of death] This is another end of Christ's assuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby destroying Satan, that he might save some out of his hands: who

Were all their lifetime subject to bondage] Meaning chiefly God's elect among the Jews; for tho' all men are in a state of bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and are Satan's captives; yet this describes more particularly the state of the Jews, under the law of Moses, which gendered unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and seeing the danger they were exposed to on that account, were subject, bound, and held fast in and under a spirit of bondage: and that *through fear*

(*k*) Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 6. & in Hab. iii. 5. (*l*) T. Bab. Suca, fol. 53. r. & Avodah Zara, fol. 5. r. & 20. 2.
(*m*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2. & 22. 4. Caphtor, fol. 26. 2. & alibi. (*n*) Bial Hatorah in Numb. iv. 19.

fear of death; through fear of a corporal death; through fear of chastisements and afflictions, the forerunners of death, and what sometimes bring it on; and through fear of death itself, as a disunion of soul and body, and as a penal evil; and through fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the Jews especially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the precepts both of the moral and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived in a continual fear of, because they were daily transgressing, which brought on them a spirit of bondage unto fear: and, as Philo the Jew (a) observes, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many of these, even all the chosen ones among them, Christ delivered, or saved from sin, from Satan, from the law, and its curses, from death corporal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

16. For verily he took not on him *the nature of angels*; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

[*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels*] Good angels; for they are all along spoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have said this of evil angels: and this is to be understood not of a denying help and assistance to the angels; for though they have not redemption from Christ, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are chosen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and sustained by him in their being, and well-being: but of a non-assumption of their nature; there was no need of it with respect to good angels, and there was no salvation designed for evil ones; and to have assumed the nature of angels, would have been of no service to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was necessary to atone for sin, save men, and destroy Satan: this negative proposition is very strongly put, "he never took," as the Vulgate Latin version more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it said in any place of scripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be disputed. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it; "he took not of, or from angels;" he took not any individual from among them.

[*But he took on him the seed of Abraham*] Not all his posterity, but some individual, as the word seed is sometimes used, *Gen.* iv. 25. and chap. xxi. 3. Christ assumed human nature as derived from Abraham; for the Messiah was to spring

from Abraham, and is promised, as that seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed; and he was particularly promised to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, to whom the apostle was writing; and it was with a view to Abraham's spiritual seed, the children of the promise, that Christ partook of flesh and blood: the word here used signifies to catch hold of any one ready to perish, or to lay hold on a person running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold any thing fast, that it be not lost, and to help persons, and do good unto them; all which may be observed in this act of Christ's, in assuming an individual of human nature, in Abraham's line, into union with his divine person; whereby he has saved those that were gone out of the way, and were ready to perish, and done them the greatest good, and shewn the strongest affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Christ, who was before Abraham, as God, though a son of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a person, but a seed, a nature he assumed; and also the union and distinction of natures in him: and Christ's taking human, and not angelic nature, shews the sovereignty of God, and his distinguishing grace and mercy to men.

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

[*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*] The adopted sons of God, who were brethren before Christ's incarnation, being from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children: Christ's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren existed; and it was only for their sakes, that he assumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he should be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the essentials of it; it was not necessary that he should have it by natural generation; nor that it should have a subsistence in itself as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are not sinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in sin, nor in sickness, and in diseases of the body: and in all temptation; though in some things his differ from theirs; none of his arose from within; and those from without could make no impression on him: and in sufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; though there is in some things a difference; his sufferings were by way of punishment; and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious,

(a) Quod omnis Probus Liber, p. 363.

meritorious, which cannot be said of theirs; but that he should have an human nature, as to its essence and perfection, like to theirs, was necessary: it was proper he should be truly and really man, as well as truly God.

That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest] He could not be an high priest, offer sacrifice for sin, and make intercession, unless he was man; nor could he be a *merciful* and compassionate one, sympathise with his people in their sorrows, temptations, and sufferings, unless he was like them in these; nor would he be a *faithful*, that is, a true and lawful one otherwise; because every high priest is taken from among men.

In things pertaining to God] In things in which God has to do with his people; as to preside in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bless them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to offer to God a sacrifice for their sins, to present this sacrifice to him, to appear in his presence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cause as their advocate.

To make reconciliation for the sins of the people] Of God's covenant-people, the people he has chosen for himself, and given to his Son; and whom Christ saves from their sins, by making satisfaction for them to the law and justice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this which could not be done without blood, without sufferings and death, it was proper he should be man, and like unto his brethren: the allusion seems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be slain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the Jews say (p), *par, alike*, in colour, in stature, and in price; and so were the birds to be alike in the same things, that were used at the cleansing of the leper (q): and the Jews tell us (r), that the high priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; all which is true of Christ.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted] By Satan, at his entrance on his public ministry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by stirring up sin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could Satan get any advantage over him; he solicited him to one thing and another,

but in vain; though these temptations were very troublesome and disagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Christ, and so must be reckoned among his sufferings, or things by which he suffered: and as afflictions are sometimes called temptations, in this sense also Christ suffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanness, with slight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the Jews with ensnaring questions; he was deserted by his followers, by his own disciples, yea by his God and Father; all which were great trials to him, and must be accounted as sufferings: and he also endured great pains of body, and anguish of mind, and at last death itself. And so

He is able to succour them that are tempted] As all the saints, more or less, are, both with Satan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God suffers to befall them, on various accounts; partly on his own account, to shew his grace, power, and faithfulness in supporting his people under them, and in delivering from them; and partly on his Son's account, that they might be like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of succouring them, and sympathising with them; and also on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulness, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and these Christ succours, by having and shewing a fellow-feeling with them; by praying for them; by supporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he must be able to succour them as he is God: and his conquering Satan is a convincing evidence to the saints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitness, and readiness to help in such circumstances, from the experience he himself has had of these things.

C H A P. III.

The apostle having discoursed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Christ's person, and his wondrous grace in the assumption of human nature, and suffering in the room and stead of his people, exhorts the Hebrews in this to a serious consideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and constancy in it; the arguments he uses to engage them to these things, are taken from the grace and benefit they themselves were partakers of through him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulness to his Father in the discharge of it, &c. &c. which is illustrated in

(p) Misna Yoma, c. 6. §. 1. (q) Misna Negaim, c. 14. §. 5.
(r) T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. §. 1.

the case of Moses, who was faithful in the house of God, and whom Christ excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, because he is the builder of the house; and partly, because he is a Son in it, when Moses was only a servant; which house is Christ's own, and consists of true and stedfast believers in him, *y.* 2—6. wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, inforced, and expressed in the words of the holy Ghost, *y.* 7—11. which are taken out of *Psalms* *xv.* 7—11. and applied to the present case: hence the apostle cautions against unbelief, as being a great evil in itself, and bad in its consequence, causing persons to depart from the living God, *y.* 12. in order to prevent which he advises to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that so they might not be hardened in sin through the deceitfulness of it, *y.* 13. and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold fast their faith in Christ to the end, since this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, *y.* 14. And then the exhortation in the above passage of scripture is recited, *y.* 15. to shew, that though not all the persons spoken of, yet some did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, *y.* 16. wherefore, by the example of punishment being inflicted on such, of which instances are given in the forefathers of these people, such as their carcases falling in the wilderness, and their not entering into the land of Canaan, which they could not, because God swore they should not, being grieved and provoked by them, and because of their unbelief, they are dissuaded from the same evils, lest they should be punished in like manner, *y.* 17—19.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Wherefore, holy brethren] The apostle calls the Hebrews *brethren*, not because they were of the same natural stock and lineage, but because they were in the same spiritual relation; they all had the same father, belonged to the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were *holy*, not by birth, nor by their external separation from other nations, but through sanctification of the Spirit; and they were so by profession, and in the opinion of the apostle.

Partakers of the heavenly calling] By which is meant, not any business, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or state; nor a

mere external call by the ministry of the word; but an internal, special call of grace, to the enjoyment of the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according to works, but according to the grace of God, and is, by powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace: and this is said to be *heavenly*, because the grace by which the saints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Gospel, is from heaven; and this epithet is used to shew the excellency of their vocation, and to distinguish it from all others: and this the Hebrews are said to be *partakers* of; which shews, that God had not utterly cast off that people, and yet that they were not the only persons that enjoyed the grace of effectual vocation; they were but partners with others; and that the saints are alike sharers in this blessing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to, is to

Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus] The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, only *Jesus*; who is called *the apostle*, because he was *sent* of God to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and salvation for his people; which mission does not suppose any inequality of persons, or change of place, or any compulsion or disrespect to Christ, but love to men; and is to be understood of him as in office as mediator, and shews his authority, and that he was no impostor. The highpriest among the Jews was, on the day of atonement, considered as, שִׁיר "an apostle, or messenger (s);" for so the elders of the Sanhedrim, address him on that day; saying, "Lord, highpriest, we are the messengers of the Sanhedrim, and thou art, שְׁלֹמֹה "our apostle, or messenger," and the messenger of the Sanhedrim." And it follows here, and *the High Priest of our profession*; which may be understood either objectively, whom they professed, both by words and deeds; for a profession of him should be public, visible, and sincere; or efficiently, he being the author, sum, and substance of the religion, faith, and Gospel, which was professed by them; and he is to be *considered* in the greatness and dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in assuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he stands in to them as a father, husband, brother, friend; and in his several offices, as mediator, and particularly as *sent* of God, to be

Saviour

Saviour of sinners; and as the high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice, and ever lives to make intercession; and all this to encourage the saints to hold fast their profession of him.

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

Who was faithful to him that appointed him] Or “made him;” Christ, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the apostle speaking of the divine nature of Christ, but of his offices: wherefore this phrase designs the constitution and settlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as mediator; the open promise of him in time; his mission, unction, and attestation from God; and his manifestation and declaration as such, at his ascension and session at God’s right hand, when he was made Lord and Christ. Now as mediator, he had a trust reposed in him; as the persons of all God’s elect, and a fulness of all grace for them; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happiness; and also the glory of God in their salvation: which trust he has faithfully discharged as an apostle, and high priest; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his Father’s doctrine he brought, and in seeking not his own, but his Father’s glory; in redeeming and saving the persons committed to him; in distributing his grace to them; and in bringing them safe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God: *as also Moses was faithful in all his house*; the passage referred to is in Numb. xii. 7. and which seems not so much to intend the fidelity of Moses, in managing the affairs of God’s house, as the largeness of the trust reposed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was invested with, in having the whole house of Israel committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets; and so the faithfulness of Christ is not so much to be understood of the discharge of his trust, as of the trust itself; and the sense is, that he was trusted much by God the Father, who constituted him mediator, even as Moses was; and this sense best agrees with v. 5, 6. And De Dieu has observed, that the Hebrew word נאמן in Misnic writings (*i*), signifies, as it does, “one that is trusted, or is fit to be trusted,” as Christ and Moses were; though the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of

more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses] Moses was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people Israel, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he shewed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converse he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to pass before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the testimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as Pharaoh and his people, and the Israelites. The Jews give very great commendations of him; they call him “a father in the law, a father in wisdom, and a father in prophecy (*u*);” and say, that “he is the father, master, head, and prince of all the prophets (*w*);” yea, “the great prophet expected in the last days, they say, will be put next to Moses, their master (*x*):” they observe, that “there were more miracles wrought by and for him, than were wrought by and for all the prophets that have been since the world began (*y*); so that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and sublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles:” but Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal saviour, but he is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation: he is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only-begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Gospel, grace, and truth, as Moses never did: he is a greater king than he, being made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than Moses, and had a greater testimony from God than he had; as, that he was his beloved Son, and to be heard: he was also raised from the dead, and is set down at the right hand of God, and is appointed judge of all; he is ministered to, and worshipped by angels, is believed on by men, who ascribe the whole glory of their salvation to him.

Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house] This house, “or tem-

(*i*) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1. (*u*) Shemot Rabba, §. 21. fol. 106. 3. Maimon. Yefode Hatorah, c. 7. §. 6. Chede Cochabim, c. 1. §. 3. & in Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 11. §. 1. Tzeror Hammot, fol. 18. 3. (*x*) Maimon. Teshubab, c. 9. §. 2. (*y*) Menasseh ben Israel, Conciliat. in Dent. qu. 11.

"*ple*," as the Arabic version renders it, is the church, of which Christ is the builder; though not to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, who are co-efficient builders with him; nor of ministers of the Gospel, as instruments; nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another: but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the conversion of souls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his Spirit in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; see *Zech.* vi. 12, 13: a greater glory than Moses, seeing he was but a part of this house, at most but a pillar in it; but Christ is the builder, foundation, and corner-stone.

4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

For every house is built by some man] Or "by some one;" for a house does not build itself: this is true of houses properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general; of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greatest saints, even apostles and prophets, such a one as Moses, are built by and upon Christ; their persons are built on him: they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and all their success is owing to him; though they are to be esteemed of in their proper places: the apostle's design is to bring down the high esteem the Jews had of Moses, that they rightly value Christ.

But he that built all things is God] Christ has built all things, and therefore he is God, and must be infinitely above Moses; for this is not to be understood of God the Father, and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Christ, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of that, and all affairs relating to it, such as the constitution of it, settling the worship of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and salvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above Moses.

5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant] Moses was not only a servant to the Israelites, but he was also the Lord's servant, a servant of his choosing, sending, and approving; he was a servant in holy things, and served the Lord heartily, sincerely, and ingenuously, with all becoming fear and reverence, respect and honour, and with all ready and cheerful obedience;

the house in which he was a servant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the Son of God, as appears from the following verse; he was not a servant in the world, and with respect to civil things, and the affairs of providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things: he did all things exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the mount; and the apostle strongly affirms all this, as he well might, since there was full proof of it, and God himself had bore a testimony to it: and the end of his being a servant here was,

For a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after] These words may regard his faithful testimony of God's will to the people of Israel, after he was fixed as a servant in God's house; or what he said afterwards concerning the Messiah, of whom he spake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable testimony, *Deut.* xviii. 15. or they may have respect to the things spoken after Moses's time, by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, which agreed with the testimony of Moses; or to the things afterwards spoken of in this epistle; to which may be added, that Moses in his office was typical of things to be spoken and done by the Messiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; his leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan's land; his giving them the law from mount Sinai; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the institution of sacrifices, and the like.

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house: whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

But Christ as a son over his own house] As Moses was not, though the Jews say that he was *דביר מנחה* (a) and *בעל חבית* (b) "lord and master of the house;" yea and *בן בית* "the son of the house (c);" but this he was not: Christ is the Son and Heir, the Lord and Master; he is a Son, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his Sonship is the foundation of his office, and hereby he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is said to be *as a son*, it does not intend mere resemblance, but is expressive of his right to heirship and government, and of the esteem and reverence he had in his house, and of his fidelity as a Son there: and though he was a servant, as Man and Mediator,

(a) Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2.

(b) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 35. 2.

(c) Lexic. Cabalistic. p. 203.

tor, and had a great piece of service to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulness, yet he was also a Son, Lord and Heir, as Moses was not: and he is over the house of God, as King, Priest, and Prophet in it, and as the First-born, Son, and Heir, and as the Master and Governor of it; and which is called *his own*, because given him by the Father, purchased by himself, and which he has built, and in which he dwells.

Whose house are we] Believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles; who as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, in whom Christ dwells by faith, and over whom he presides and reigns.

If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end] These words are not to be understood as a condition of the former assertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the supposition proves not such an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, shall keep them to the end; and therefore are the house of Christ: besides, the doctrine of apostasy, is quite repugnant to the apostle's argument; according to which, Christ might have no house, and can have none till men have persevered, but the apostle's design is to give a word of exhortation to himself and others, to hold fast the confidence; and so the words are rather descriptive of the persons, who are the house of Christ; such who have a good hope through grace wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can use freedom of speech and boldness at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of interest in the love of God, and salvation by Christ, and go on in the exercise of these graces to the end of their days.

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,

Wherefore as the holy Ghost saith] In Psalm xcv. 7.

To-day if ye will hear his voice] Either the precepts of Christ, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment of Christ as king of saints, and is a testimony of love to him, and is well-pleasing in his sight; and in which the saints find pleasure themselves, and profit also: or the Gospel of Christ, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of liberty, redemption, and salvation by Christ; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and *to-day*, may intend some festival-day in David's

time, when, and on account of which, this Psalm was penned; as the feast of tabernacles, which was a type of Christ tabernacled in human nature; or it may regard the time of man's life, while it is day, or the present instant of life; or rather, the whole Gospel dispensation. The Psalm from whence these and some following words are taken, belongs to the Messiah; for the person, the subject of it, is called the rock of our salvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the ascription of Deity, and divine worship; the creation and preservation of the universe; yea, he is represented as a shepherd, and the saints as his sheep; which plainly points at the office of Christ: and these very words are often made use of by the Jews, and applied to the Messiah, shewing that if the Jews would repent but one day, or keep the sabbath but one day, the son of David, the Messiah would come; since it is said, *to-day if ye will hear his voice* (d); which the Chaldee paraphrase renders מִמְרֵהוּ "his Word," his essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

Harden not your hearts] There is a natural hardness of the heart; the heart of man is like a stone, destitute of spiritual life, motion, and activity; it is senseless, stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, on which no impressions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardness of heart, to which men arrive by various steps; as entertaining pleasing thoughts of sin; an actual commission of it, with frequency, till it becomes customary, and so habitual; an extenuation or justification of it, and so they become hardened against all reproofs and sermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are insensible and past feeling, and openly declare for sin, and glory in it: and there is a hardness which God's people are liable to, and should guard against; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worship, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to lesser sins; for all sin is of an hardening nature.

As in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness] The Jews provoked God in the wilderness by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by distrusting his power and goodness; hence, one of the places in which they murmured against him

(d) T. B. b. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. r. Shemot Rabba, §. 25. fol. 109. 3. & Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 7.

him was called *Massah* and *Meribah*, Exod. xvii. 7. and it is an aggravation of their sin, that it was in the wilderness, after they had been just brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had such an instance of the power and goodness of God, in bringing them through the Red sea; and where they could have no human supplies, and therefore should have been entirely dependent on God, and trust in him.

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

When your fathers tempted me] This the apostle cites and repeats, to expose the glorying of the Jews in their ancestors; to dissuade them from following their sinful practices; to deter them from the same by observing both their sin and punishment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Gospel of Christ.

Proved me] This is either an explication of the former phrase; or it may design the experience this people had of the power and goodness of God, notwithstanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a distrust of them; which is an aggravation of their sin and ingratitude, and shews the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours.

And saw my works forty years] That is, God's works of providence, in furnishing them with the necessities of life, in guiding, protecting, and supporting them, for the space of forty years in the wilderness; and his miracles, and the punishment of their enemies; yet they saw and perceived not, but all this time sinned against the Lord; see *Deut. xxix. 2—8.* the space of time, *forty years*, is in the Psalm placed to the beginning of the next verse, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is also by the apostle, in *1. 17.* but the people's sin, and God's grief at it, being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reason of its being repeated, and so much notice taken of it, is, because there was just this number of years from Christ's sufferings, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which the apostle might have in view.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation] *וְהָיָה דָּוָר* “the generation of the wilderness,” as the Jews often call them; and which they say was more beloved than any generation (*e*); and

yet they will not allow them a part in the world to come; see the note on the following verse. When God is said to be *grieved* with them, it is to be considered as an anthropopathy, as speaking after the manner of men, as in *Gen. vi. 5, 6.* The word signifies, that “he was wearied by them, and weary of them;” that he loathed them, and was displeased with them; it shews the notice God took of their sin; the heinousness of it, his displicency at it, and determination to punish it: the cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry.

And said, They do alway err in their heart] All sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in the life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shews the fottishness of this people; their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart-sins as well as others, are taken notice of by God.

And they have not known my ways] They did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of; and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands.

11 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

So I swear in my wrath] Swearing is ascribed to God, to shew the certainty of the thing spoken of; as of mercies, when he swears in love, and by his holiness; so here, of punishment, when he swears in wrath, in indignation, in sore displeasure, and the threatened evil is irrevocable and inevitable.

They shall not enter into my rest] Into the land of Canaan, called God's *rest*, because he promised it, and gave it to the Israelites as their rest; and where he himself had a place of rest; and where he gave the Messiah, the author of peace and rest; and which was a type of heaven, that rest from toil and labour which remains for the people of God; and into which it is said, this generation did not enter; for the Jews say (*f*), “The generation of the wilderness have no part in the world to come:” but this seems too harsh, for doubtless there were many who died in the wilderness, that went safe to heaven, notwithstanding all their sins and provocations.

12 Take

(e) T. Hierol. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2.

(f) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 113. 1.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Take heed, brethren] This exhortation is founded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles *brethren*, to shew that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love.

Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief] Or such an evil heart in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in times past: and this sin, when it gets a-head, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil: and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother-sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfits for duty, and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following.

In departing from the living God] That is, from Christ, who is the Son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context, and who is not only the Son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he has life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in

the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resented by him.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

But exhort one another daily] In order to prevent unbelief and apostasy. The phrase is sometimes rendered, "comfort one another, or, yourselves together," as in 1 *Thess.* v. 11. which the saints may do, by discoursing together about divine things; by praying together; by instructing one another in the doctrines of the Gospel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promises; and by observing the near approach of everlasting happiness with Christ. And though the business of exhortation greatly belongs to ministers of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes necessary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their conversations; to a close adherence to their profession; and to a believing view and consideration of Christ, the apostle and high priest of it; and to a due concern for his truth and interest: and this should be done in love, with good and consolatory words, and in things, in which the saints are concerned, and do themselves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulness; and supposes that God's own people may be dull, heavy, and sluggish; and this is to be done *daily*, every day, as often as there is an occasion, and an opportunity for it: and

While it is called to-day] While the Gospel-dispensation continues; or while the time of life lasts. This shews that the phrase *to-day*, in *Psalms* xciv. did not respect David's time only. The Syriac version renders it, "until that day which is called 'to-day;'" until the everlasting day appears, when there will be no need of such exhortations, nor any danger of what follows.

Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin] Actual sin, which is a transgression of the law; every sin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callousness brought upon the heart and conscience; or the corruption of nature, indwelling sin

fin may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart which deceives through promises of pleasure, or profit to a man's self, or of secrecy and impunity; it suggests the power a man has to repent at pleasure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

For we are made partakers of Christ] Being loved by him, given to him, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and so participate of all spiritual blessings in him; for this respects something past, and may be rendered, "we have been made." The phrase is expressive of union to Christ, which is not by faith on man's part, and by the spirit on Christ's part, but by his everlasting love, taking his people into an oneness with himself; thereby becoming their head, surety, and representative, which is the ground and foundation of all the blessings of grace being imparted to them: hence arises communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of persons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlasting glory; as it is a federal or representative union, hence a non-imputation of sin justification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and the security of it, and of all grace and strength; hence holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance, and everlasting happiness both of soul and body.

If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end] By confidence is meant faith, which is an hypostasis, or subsistence, which is the word here used; and is so called, because it gives a kind of subsistence, substance, or being to things it is concerned with, *Heb. xi. 1.* and because it is a great support to believers, under their various exercises; and is that by which they have an open, spiritual, and comfortable subsistence, and abiding in Christ: the beginning of it which is to be held fast, is either Christ himself, who is the *αρχη* "the beginning, the author," and finisher of faith; and so this shews from whom, and in what way, this grace is distributed; and is expressive of communion with Christ, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or else the Gospel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held fast, and never to be departed from: or else the grace of faith itself, which is a grace but begun, not yet finished, but shall continue, and is to be held fast,

and constantly exercised; and perseverance in believing on Christ is an evidence of union to him.

15 While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

Exhort one another, and hold fast Christ and his Gospel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in *ψ. 7, 8.* in order to make a further improvement of it; which shews, that the words belong to the present times of the Gospel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and that scripture instructions and exhortations are of perpetual use.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

For some, when they had heard] The Arabic version adds, "his voice;" the law on mount Sinai; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole system of laws and ordinances delivered to Moses, and by him to them; and also the Gospel, for that was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, and heard by them; as appears from chapter *iv. 2.* and which seems chiefly intended: and yet some of the hearers of it,

Did provoke] Not only Moses, to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but they provoked *Jehovah* himself, and the angel of his presence, and his holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief: and the aggravation of their sin is, that they did it when they had heard the Gospel, and while they were hearing it; which shews that the Gospel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careless and indifferent manner; when it makes no impression, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and Spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Gospel heard, comes to be an aggravation of mens condemnation.

Howbeit not all that come out of Egypt by Moses] That is, they did not all provoke, but some did; which is another aggravation of their sin; they were just come out of Egyptian bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outstretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by Moses; by the hand of Moses, as the Syriac version renders it; by his means, by him as an instrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet these

these were but few; it seems only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand; God will have a few to serve him in the worst of times.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?*

But with whom was he grieved forty years? As is said in *Psalms* xcvi. 10. see the note on *Psalm* x. 10.

Was it not with them that had sinned? Not merely by committing personal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing public sins; they sinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commission of sin: every sin is grieving to God, because it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a transgression of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but especially public sins, or the sins of a multitude, and when they are persisted in, which was the case of the Israelites; they sinned against him during the forty years they were in the wilderness; and so long was he grieved with them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "with them that believed not;" which points out the particular sin these men were guilty of, and which was so grieving to God, and suits well with the apostle's design.

Whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And so never entered into the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at least not all of them; their deaths were by way of punishment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the Syriac version renders it, "their bones fell in the wilderness;" they lay scattered and unburied, and exposed to view, as an example of divine vengeance; see *Numb.* xiv. 29.

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest? As in *Psalms* xcvi. 11. see the note on *Psalm* x. 11.

But to them that believed not? The Lord; notwithstanding the signs and wonders he shewed among them, they would not be persuaded by Moses and Aaron, by Joshua and Caleb, to be still and quiet, to cease murmuring, and submit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were disobedient, stubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reason God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into the good land. Unbelief is a source of sin, and cause of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

So we see that they could not enter in? To God's rest, the land of Canaan, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcases fell in the wilderness, before they came to it, *Numb.* xiv. 37, 45. and the reason was,

Because of unbelief? Their distrust of God, his power, and his providence: this instance is produced by the apostle, to shew the evil nature of unbelief; and the sad effects of it; to deter persons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which instance he further improves in the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

From the punishment inflicted on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest made mention of in the preceding chapter, the apostle proceeds to caution the present Hebrews of his time, and who professed faith in Christ, lest seeing there was a rest, and a promise of entering into it, they should seem to come short of it, *Psalm* i. and the rather, since they that fell in the wilderness had the Gospel preached to them as well as they; and the reason why it did not profit was, because it was not received by faith, *Psalm* 2. as also seeing it is by faith that believers now enter into rest, *Psalm* 3. which rest is not the rest of the seventh day, on which God rested; nor the rest of the land of Canaan which Joshua led the Israelites into; for if he had entered them into the rest the apostle means, David, so many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another rest, *Psalm* 4—8. wherefore it follows that there is another rest for the people of God, which he that enters into ceases from his own works, as God did from his, *Psalm* 9, 10. and this is the rest that every one that professes faith in Christ should be solicitous and diligent to enter into, lest he should fall short of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving Israelites did of their rest, *Psalm* 11. and the arguments engaging to such a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Christ, the essential word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniscience, *Psalm* 12, 13. And seeing he is by nature the Son of God, and by office a great high priest that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold fast the profession of faith in him they have made, *Psalm* 14. and the rather, since he is a sympathizing high-priest, as he must needs be, since he has been tempted, afflicted, and has suffered

suffered every way as his people; and is in all respects like them, excepting that he has no sin, *ψ*. 15. and this consideration should engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldness, and in expectation of having grace and mercy bestowed on them for the supply of their daily wants, *ψ*. 16.

LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Let us therefore fear] Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and distrust of the power, grace, and goodness of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealousy, a careful circumspection, and watchfulness.

Lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest] Not the land of Canaan, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itself, the ultimate glory: there is a rest of the body in the grave, from work, service, and labour, and from distempers and diseases; where it rests under the guardianship of the Spirit, until the resurrection-morn; and there is a rest of the soul before the resurrection, in the arms of Christ, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a rest both of soul and body after the resurrection, from sin, from afflictions, from Satan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called, the rest of God, because he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and besides, heaven is the place of God's rest, *Isaiah* lxvi. 1, 2. and the possession and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often signified by an entering into it: and there is a promise of this, which is left in Christ's hands, and shall never fail; though some who have hoped for it may come short of it, or at least seem to do so: but rather, a rest under the Gospel-dispensation is here intended, since it is a rest believers enter into now, *ψ*. 3. and since the Gospel-church is represented as a state of peace and rest, *Isaiah* xi. 6—10. and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteousness of Christ to the saints; in a freedom from a spirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's rest, which he has provided for New Testament saints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profession of it; and the Gospel is the promise or declaration which was left among these Hebrews, and in the world, to encourage them so to do: left.

Any of you should seem to come short of it] Either of the promise, or the rest promised; which if understood of the heavenly glory, the sense is, that though true believers shall not come short of that, yet they may seem to others to do so; and therefore should be careful of their lives and conversations, that they might not seem to come short; and this they should do, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the good of others: but if the rest, and the promise of it intend the Gospel and its dispensation; the meaning is, that saints should be concerned so to behave, that they might not seem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of God, and to be disappointed of that rest and peace promised in it. One of Stephens's copies read, "left any of us;" which seems most agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

For unto us was the Gospel preached] The Gospel is the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; and this may be said to be preached, when men preach not themselves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix Law and Gospel together, nor make justification and salvation to be by works, nor set persons to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ; but when they preach Christ, and salvation alone by him; and so it was preached to the Hebrews, and that more fully, and with more clearness, power, and success than formerly; and which is a privilege and blessing; and is sometimes blessed for the conviction of sinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, "we were evangelized;" as such may be said to be, who have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who desire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now though this was true of the apostle and others, yet is not the sense here, because of what follows,

As well as unto them] Or "even as they;" for though the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, in the ministry of Moses, and by types and sacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or cast into a Gospel mold, or brought into a Gospel spirit: however it was preached unto them; which shews the antiquity of

of it; the sameness of the method of salvation in all ages; the necessity of salvation by Christ, and the unity of Christ's church under different dispensations.

But the word preached did not profit them] That is, the Gospel, which is here called "the word of hearing," as it may be rendered; because it is and may be heard; and there is a necessity of hearing, in order to faith in Christ: the word signifies a rumour, or report: the Gospel is a report of Christ, his person and offices; of his great love to sinners, and of what he has done for them; but though it is a word of hearing, a report made, and the word preached, yet to some it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea it is the favour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reason of the inefficacy and unprofitableness of the word to the Israelites was, its

Not being mixed with faith in them that heard it] The Gospel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and tastes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digests it; and when this is the case, it is profitable and nourishing; but when it is otherwise, it is not. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and five of Beza's ancient copies, and as many of Stephens's, with others, read, "they were not mixed;" referring it not to the word, but to persons; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and the sense is, that the generality of the Israelites did not join themselves in faith, in believing in God, to Caleb and Joshua; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and so the word became useless to them: there ought to be an union or conjunction of the saints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Christ, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and though the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the saints; yet forsaking the assembly of the saints, and not constantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in public worship, is one reason of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For we which have believed do enter into rest] Not eternal rest; all believers shall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at present enjoyed, unless things future may be said to be

VOL. V.

present, because of faith in them, and the certainty of them; but spiritual rest in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which is a rest from the burden of the law of Moses, and from all toil and labour for life, and salvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of soul, notwithstanding the world's troubles and Satan's temptations; and such who believe the word, or Gospel preached, and Christ in it, not with a general and historical faith, or only in profession, but with the heart, and in truth, these enjoy this rest; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much spiritual ease and comfort: this character distinguishes them from the unbelieving Israelites of old, and from present hypocrites and formal professors.

As he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest] The words are in *Psalms* xcv. 11. and are before cited in chapter iii. 11. see the note there: they entered not in because of unbelief; none but believers enter into spiritual rest. The apostle applies this proof to his design, by removing all other rests, and particularly by shewing that it does not mean God's rest from the works of creation.

Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world] That is, though the works of creation, all that God designed to make, were finished and perfected within the first six days of the world, and then God rested or ceased to work in a creative way; yet this is not the rest designed in the passage of scripture cited, nor is it that rest which believers enter into.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

For he spake in a certain place] *Gen. ii. 2.* that is, Moses, the penman of that book spoke, or God by him.

Of the seventh day on this wise] Of the seventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth.

And God did rest the seventh day from all his works] Of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this rest suppose labour with fatigue and weariness, and ease and refreshment from it; only cessation from working in a creative way, and the utmost delight, complacency and satisfaction in what he had done. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the phrase, "the seventh day."

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

E

And

And in this place again] In *Psalms* xcv. 11. he speaks again of another rest distinct from that on the seventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Gospel dispensation enter into.

If they shall enter into my rest] That is, unbelievers shall not enter into it; as the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into the typical rest, so neither shall any unbeliever enter into the Gospel rest, the antitype of the former.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

Seeing therefore it remaineth] It follows, by just consequence,

That some must enter therein] For God's swearing concerning some, that they should not enter into his rest, supposes that others should.

And they to whom it was first preached] To whom the Gospel was first preached, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness.

Entered not in because of unbelief] See chapter iii. 19.

7 (Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

(Again, he limiteth a certain day] Since the seventh day of the creation was a day of rest which God entered into, and not man; and since the land of Canaan was a typical rest, which the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into, because of unbelief; and yet there must be persons, and there must be a time for them to enter into the true rest which God has left a promise of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Gospel-dispensation, for believers to enter into it.

Saying unto David] Or "by David," who was the penman of the ninety-fifth psalm, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeable to, and confirms a rule which the Jews give, that those psalms which are without a title were written by David (g); the Spirit of God spake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of rest from the abovementioned.

To-day, after so long a time] As two thousand five hundred years from the first seventh day to David's time, and five hundred years from the times of Moses and Joshua, to his.

As it is said] The Alexandrian copy reads,

(g) Aben Ezra & Kimchi Præfat, in Tillim,

"as it is before said, or above said," as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that is, in *Psalms* xcv. 7, 8. before cited, chapter iii. 7, 8.

To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts] See the note on chapter iii. 7, 8.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

For if Jesus had given them rest] That is, Joshua; for Hoshuah, Joshua, and Jesus, are one and the same name; or "Jesus himself," as two of Stephens's copies read; and so Joshua is called Jesus by the Septuagint interpreters on *Exodus* xvii. 10. and chapter xxiv. 13. and other places where he is mentioned; and also by Josephus (h), and Philo (i) the Jew. The Syriac version, lest any should mistake this for Jesus Christ, adds, "the son of Nun;" who is certainly the person designed, as the apostle's reasoning shews; who was an eminent type of Jesus Christ: there is an agreement in their names, both signify a Saviour; Joshua was a temporal favour, Christ a spiritual one: and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest: had he,

Then would he not afterward have spoken of another day] That is, God, in David's time, and by him, would not have so long after appointed another day of rest; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole Gospel-dispensation, in the times of the Messiah; wherefore the apostle concludes as follows;

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Not all mankind; nor the people of the Jews only; rather the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament; the people whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, with whom

he

(h) Antiq. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. §. 2. c. 8. §. 46, 47, 48. & l. 9. c. 1. §. 1. & passim, (i) De Charitate, p. 698, 699, 700.

he has made a covenant in him, and whom Christ saves from their sins, and calls by his grace; and the rest which remains for them, is not a new sabbath-day, but a sabbatism: and this does not so much design eternal rest in heaven; though the Jews often call that a sabbath; the xciii psalm they say is a psalm for the time to come, שבת שכלי "which is all sabbath," and the rest of eternal life (†); but rather this intends the spiritual rest believers have in Christ under the Gospel-dispensation, which they now enter into, and of which the apostle had been treating; and as for the word *remaineth*, this does not denote the futurity of it, but the apostle's inference or consequence from what he had said; and the sense is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear consequence from what has been observed, that there is another rest distinct from God's rest on the seventh day, and from the rest in the land of Canaan: which were both typical ones of the present rest the saints now enjoy: so the Jews call "the world to come," the times of the Messiah, שבת העולם "the great sabbath (1)."

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.)

For he that is entered into his rest] This is to be understood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Gospel rest, or into eternal rest, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; for a single person is only spoken of, and not many, as in *ψ. 3.* and the rest entered into is his own, which cannot be said of any other; and besides, a comparison is run between his entrance into rest, and ceasing from his works, and God's resting the seventh day, and ceasing from his, which can only agree with him; and besides, Christ is immediately spoken of, and at large described in *ψ. 12—14.* Now he entered into his rest, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the saints rest under the Gospel-dispensation; for these words are a reason of the former, as appears by the causal particle *for*: and now being at rest,

He also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his] Christ had works to do, as preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and obtaining the redemption and salvation of his people: these were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finished them; and so ceases

from them, as never to repeat them more; they being done effectually, stand in no need of it; and so as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand, the effects of his labour answering his designs; just as God ceased from the works of creation, when he had finished them.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest] Not eternal rest; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; salvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works do not go before to prepare heaven for the saints, but follow after: nor is the saints entrance into it a precarious thing; God has promised it, and provided it for his people; Christ is in the possession of it, and is preparing it for them; and the Spirit of God is working them up for the self-same thing, and Christ will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Gospel-rest is here meant, that rest which believers now enter into, and is at this present time for them, *ψ. 3, 10.* and though true believers are entered into it, yet their rest, peace, and joy in Christ, is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for, by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires strength, diligence, and industry; and supposes difficulties and discouragements, through the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of Satan; and this is designed to quicken and awaken a godly jealousy in God's people over themselves.

Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief] Into the sin of unbelief, and into punishment through it, as the Israelites did; who sinning, their carcases fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into God's rest, as he swore they should not: true believers may fall into sin, and from a degree of the exercise of grace, and of the steadfastness of the Gospel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, because they are kept by the power of God; yet they may so fall, as to come short, or at least seem to come short, of enjoying the rest and peace of the Gospel-state: external professors may fall from the Gospel, and the religion they have professed, and come short of the glory they expected; and fall into just and deserved punishment, in like manner as the unbelieving Israelites did.

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword,

(†) *Mish. Tamid*, c. 7. §. 4. *T. Bab. Sanhedrim*, fol. 97. 1. *Shirhashirim Rabba*, fol. 16. 3. *Masscheth Sopherim*, c. 18. §. 1. *Tzeror Hammor*, fol. 3. 1. (1) *Zohar in Gen.* fol. 31. 4. *Shaare Ora*, fol. 17. 1. *Caphtor*, fol. 64. 1.

sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

[*For the word of God is quick and powerful*] This is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God; for *the Word of God* was a known name of the Messiah among the Jews; see the note on *John* i. 1. and therefore the apostle makes use of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reason why care should be taken, that men fall not off from the Gospel, because Christ, the author, sum, and substance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient; for not a thing, but a person is spoken of, who is a judge, and a critical discerner of the secrets of mens hearts: and certain it is, that this word is spoken of as a person, and is said to be a priest in the following verses; to which may be added, that the several things said of the Word exactly agree with Christ: he *is the Word of God*; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only-begotten of the Father; he is the Word that spoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promised, and spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, and our Advocate with the Father: he is *quick*, or, as it may be better rendered, *living*; he has life in himself as God, he is the living God; he is the living Redeemer and Mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the Author and Giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal: and he is *powerful*, as he appears to be in the creation and sustentation of all things; in his miracles and ministrations; in the work of man's redemption; in the preservation of his people, and in his advocacy and intercession.

[*And sharper than any two-edged sword*] Or "more cutting than one," by the words of his mouth, by the power of his spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itself is as a sharp sword, and out of it comes forth one, *Isaiah* xlix. 2. *Rev.* xix. 13, 15. by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. *Jehovah* is called a two-edged sword with the Jews (*m*); and Philo the Jew speaks of the flaming sword of the *Logos* (*n*).

[*Piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow*] The like property Philo the Jew ascribes to the *Logos*, or Word; he calls him *τομευς* "a cutter;" and says, he cuts and divides all things, even all sensible things,

yea atoms, and things indivisible (*o*): the apostle seems to have respect to the several names with which the soul of man is called by the Jews, נפש רוח ונשמה "soul, spirit, and breath" (*p*); the latter of these, they say, dwells between the other two. Some by *the soul* understand the natural and unregenerate part in man, man, and by *the spirit* the renewed and regenerate part, which though sometimes are not so easily distinguished by men, yet they are by Christ; others think the soul designs the inferior faculties, the affections; and the spirit the superior ones, the mind and understanding: but the apostle's meaning seems to be this, that whereas the soul and spirit are invisible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; so sharp and quicksighted, and so penetrating is the divine word, that it reaches the most secret and hidden things of men, and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

[*And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*] Christ knows what is in man; he is the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men; and this will be more apparent at the last day, when he will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and will critically inquire, and accurately judge of them.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

[*Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight*] Christ is the Lord God omniscient; there is no creature in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and seen by him; for all creatures are made and upheld by him, and he is omnipresent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifest to him; so מֵרִיר "creature," is often used by the Rabbins for *man*: all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profession, and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostasy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them

(o) Quis rerum divin. Hæres, p. 499, 500, 510, 511, 513.

(p) Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & 113. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 58. 3, 4. & in Lev. fol. 29. 2. T. Hieros. Celaim, foli 31. 3. Tactor Hammor, fol. 2. 2.

(m) Zohar in Cab. Lex. p. 364.

(n) De Cherubim, p. 112.

them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls. So Philo the Jew says (g), "the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing escapes him;" and this phrase is very commonly used of the divine Being by the Jews, *הכל גלוי לפניו* "all things are manifest before him (r);" and this being used of Christ, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper Deity.

But all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do] The words are an allusion to wrestlers, who exercised naked, and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered *opened*, is by some translated, he was publicly exposed and known: or to the putting of a creature in such a posture when sacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails; and especially to the manner of doing it among the Jews, with which these persons, the apostle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; "When the lamb for the daily sacrifice was slain, the priest hung it up by the foot, and skinned it; and when he came to the breast, he cut off the head; and having finished the skinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the shoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down through the chine-bone, and *לפניו גלוי* "all of it was manifest before him (s)." The very phrase before used. The word here used seems to answer to *עָרַף* which, with the Arabians, signifies, to know, or make known; and *עָרַף* with the Rabbins is used for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the Hebrew, is *עָרַף* "the neck." The last clause, *with whom we have to do*, manifestly points at the person here spoken of, Jesus Christ: saints have a concern with him now, as their way to the Father, as their Saviour and Redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification, and with his fulness for every supply of grace; and with him as their King to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their Prophet to teach them, and their high Priest to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, "to whom we must give an account;" and so the Syriac version renders them, "to whom they give an account;" as all men must at the great day: and

all this that is said of the Word of God, should engage to care, watchfulness, and circumspection in the course of a profession of religion.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest] That Christ is a priest, and an *high priest*, has been observed already, in chapter ii. 17. but here he is called a *great* one, because of the dignity of his person, as follows; and the virtue of his sacrifice; and because of the place where he now officiates as a priest, heaven; and with respect to the continuation of his priesthood; and likewise because he makes others priests unto God; and this great high priest is no other than the Word of God before spoken of: so the divine *Logos*, or Word, is often called a priest, and an *high priest*, by Philo the Jew (t). This great high priest believers have, and have an interest in him; he is called to this office, and invested with it; he has been sent to do his work as a priest; and he has done the greatest part of it, and is now doing the rest; and saints receive Christ as such, and the blessings of grace from him, through his sacrifice and intercession.

That is passed into the heavens] He came down from thence, and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby he fully answers to his character as the great high priest: and what makes him more fully to appear so, is what follows,

Jesus the Son of God] The former of these names signifies a Saviour, and respects his office; the latter is expressive of his dignity, and respects his person; who is the Son of God in such sense as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption, but by nature; not as man and mediator, but as God, being of the same nature with his Father, and equal to him; and it is this which makes him a great high priest, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as such: wherefore,

Let us hold fast our profession] Of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Christ, and salvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happiness; which being made both by words and deeds, publicly and sincerely, should be held fast; which supposes something valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that

(g) De Sacrific. Abel, p. 140.

(r) Tzeror Hammor, fol.

122. 2. Vld. Seder Tephillot; fol. 281, 1. Ed. Basil.

(s) Misna Tamid, c. 4. §. 2.

(t) Alleg. l. 2. p. 76. De Profugis, p. 466. & de Somniis, p. 597.

it requires strength, courage, and greatness of mind, and an use of all proper means: and it should be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Gospel; and it has been made publicly before witnesses; and not to hold it fast is displeasing to God, and resented by him: and the priesthood of Christ is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high priest of our profession; he has espoused our cause, and abode by it; he has bore witness to the truth of the Gospel himself; he prays for the support of our faith; he pities and succours; and he is passed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

For we have not an high priest] That is cruel and unmerciful; the saints have an high priest, but not such an one,

Which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities] Such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan; under all which Christ sympathises with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints.

But was in all points tempted like as we are] Of the temptations of Christ, and of the saints, see the note on chapter ii. 18.

Yet without sin] There was no sin in his nature: though he was encompassed about with infirmities, yet not with sinful infirmities, only sinless ones; nor was there any sin in his temptations; though he was solicited to sin by Satan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commission of any sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace] Either to Christ, who is before spoken of as an high priest, and who was typified by the mercy-seat, to which there seems to be an allusion; and coming to him as a priest upon his throne, is very proper: to him saints come for pardon and cleansing, and for a justifying righteousness, for the acceptance of their persons, and the presentation

of their services, and for every supply of grace; and to him they may come boldly, since he stands in the relations of a father, husband, and brother; and from him they may expect to receive mercy, since it is kept for him, and with him, and is only dispensed through him; and in him they may hope to find grace, since all fulness of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, since their help is laid on him. Or else to God the Father, since Christ, the high priest, is the way of access to God, and it is by him the saints come unto the Father; who is represented as on a throne, to shew his majesty, and to command reverence; and as on a throne of grace, to encourage distressed souls to come unto him; and to express his sovereignty in the distribution of his grace: and this coming to him is a sacerdotal act, for every believer is a priest; and is not local, but spiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with spiritual sacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done boldly, or with freedom of speech; speaking out plainly all that is in the heart, using an holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from servile fear, and a bashful spirit; all which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and such a spirit and behaviour at the throne of grace, are very consistent with reverence of the divine majesty, with submission to his will, and with that humility which becomes saints. The Jews often speak of כסא הדין "a throne of judgment," and כסא רחמים "a throne of mercy (u);" and represent God as sitting upon one or other of these, when he is dispensing justice or mercy (w); and the latter they sometimes call, as here, כסא רחמים וחסד "a throne of grace and mercy (x):" and so they make the first man Adam to pray to God after this manner (y); "Let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before, כסא רחמים "the throne of thy mercy." The end of coming hither is,

That we may obtain mercy] The sure mercies of David, the blessings of the everlasting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the fresh application of it, and every other blessing of grace that is needful: and there is reason to expect it, since there is mercy with God; and it is with Christ;

(u) Targum in Psalm xxix. 10. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 38. 3. & in Numb. fol. 91. 2. & 97. 2.

(w) Megillat Esther, fol. 95. 1. (x) Raziell, fol. 32. 1.

(y) Ibid. fol. 3. 1.

Christ, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for those that ask it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlasting.

And find grace to help in time of need] The Syriac version renders it, "in time of affliction;" which is a time of need, as every time of distress is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or through the persecutions of men, or the temptations of Satan: and help at such times may be expected; since not only God is able to help, but he has promised it; and he has laid help on Christ; and gives it seasonably, and at the best time; and it springs from grace, yea it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the discoveries of God's love, and the supplies of grace from Christ: which may be hoped for, seeing God is the God of all grace; and he is seated on a throne of grace; and all fulness of grace dwells in Christ: to find grace, often signifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.

CHAP. V.

The apostle having made mention of Christ as an high priest, in the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give an account of an high priest, and applies the character of him to Christ; and shews that he is of another order of priesthood than that of Aaron, even of the order of Melchisedek; of whom he could say many things, but the Hebrews were dull of hearing them; which leads him to blame them for their rudeness, and non-proficiency. The description of the high priest is taken from his relation to men, separation from them, and ordination for them; from his oblation of their gifts and sacrifices; from his sympathy with them, and from his call of God, *y. 1-4.* all which are accommodated to Christ; as his vocation of God, *y. 5, 6.* confirmed by two testimonies out of *Psalms ii. 7.* and *cx. 4.* his being a man, and having infirmities, though sinless ones, and his sympathy with men, and compassion on them, *y. 7.* his obedience and sufferings, and the oblation of himself, whereby he became the author of salvation to his people, which is the main thing in his priesthood, *y. 8, 9.* and which was not of the order of Aaron, though in some things there was an agreement with it, but of the order of Melchisedek, *y. 10.* of whom the apostle could say many surprising things; but these Hebrews were dull of apprehension, and incapable of receiving them, *y. 11.* And then he proceeds to blame them for their dullness, which he aggravates by the time they had been in the school

of Christ, when it might have been expected they would have been teachers of others; by their being yet scholars, and of the lowest class, who had need to be taught the first rudiments of the christian religion; yea, by their being as babes that stood in need of milk, and could not bear meat, *y. 12.* And then follows a description both of babes, and of adult persons; such as are unskilful in the word of righteousness are babes, and use milk; but those who exercise their spiritual senses, to discern between good and bad doctrine, are adult, and can digest strong meat, *y. 13, 14.*

FOR every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

For every high priest taken from among men] Every one that was an high priest under the law, was a man, and not an angel; and it was proper he should be so, that he might be a priest for men, have compassion on them, and offer for them; and he was among the number of common men, and was taken out from them, and chosen and separated from the rest of men, as Aaron and his sons were from the children of Israel, *Exod. xxviii. 1.* And such an one

Is ordained for men] In their room and stead, and for their good; and above them, as the word sometimes signifies; he was exalted unto, and invested with a superior office, to which he was ordained according to the law of a carnal commandment, by anointing with oil, and without an oath.

In things pertaining to God] In things in which God had to do with men; and so he presided over them in the name of God, and declared the will of God unto them, and blessed them: and in things in which men had to do with God; and so he appeared in their name, and represented their persons, and presented their sacrifices to God, as follows.

That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins] Free will-offerings, peace-offerings, burnt-offerings, sin and trespass-offerings, all kinds of sacrifice.

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

Who can have compassion on the ignorant] Who have committed sins of ignorance, and bring their sacrifices for them; these he does not insult and upbraid,

upbraid, nor break out into anger and indignation against; but pities them, and sympathises with them; has a just measure of compassion, suitable to their condition, and bears with them with great moderation and temper.

And on them that are out of the way] Of God's commandments; who are like sheep going astray, and turn to their own way; who transgress the law of God, and err from it; perhaps such who sin knowingly and wilfully, and through infirmity, are meant.

For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity] Not of body only, but of mind, sinful infirmity; he had much of it, it beset him all around; he was clothed with it, as the Syriac version renders it; as Joshua the high priest was with filthy garments, *Zech. iii. 3.*

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

And by reason hereof] Because of his sinful infirmity.

He ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins] As he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people, so he was obliged to offer for his own sins; in this Christ differed from the high priest, for he had no sin of his own to offer for, chapter vii. 27. but he had, and therefore offered for them, *Lev. xvi. 11.* and make a confession of them: the form of which, as used on the day of atonement, was this; "He put both his hands upon the bullock, and confessed, and thus he said: I beseech thee, O Lord; I have done wickedly, I have transgressed, I have sinned before thee, I and my house; I beseech thee, O Lord, pardon the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done wickedly, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house." And this he did a second time on that day (z).

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

And no man taketh this honour to himself] That is, the honour of the priesthood: the office of the high priest was a very honourable one; it was a peculiar honour to Aaron, and his sons, to be separated unto it; their instalment into it was very grand and solemn; at that time they were anointed with oil, and clothed with glorious garments, and sacrifices were offered for them; they had an honourable maintenance assigned them, and a large retinue of priests and levites to attend them;

great respect and reverence were shewn them: but their principal honour lay in the work they performed; in representing the whole body of the people; in offering gifts and sacrifices for them; in blessing them; and in the resolution of difficult cases brought unto them; in all which they were types of Christ, the high priest. Now no man might take this honourable office upon himself, or intrude himself into it, or obtain it by any unjust method, or in any other way than by a call from God; nor did any man dare to do it, until of late, when some got into it of themselves, and others were put in by the Roman governors, and even purchased it of them (a): so Joshua ben Gamla became an high priest (b); and some have thought the apostle has some respect to these wicked practices, and tacitly reproves them, as what ought not to be: for no one ought to be in this office.

But he that is called of God, as was Aaron] Whose call was immediately from the Lord, and was unquestionable: Moses was ordered to separate him, and his sons, from the children of Israel, and instal them into this office; they were destroyed by fire, or swallowed up by the earth, that disputed his call; and this was confirmed by a miracle, by his dry rod budding, blooming, and bringing forth almonds: and the apostle instances in him, because his call was so remarkable and authentic; and because he was the first high priest of the Jews, and from whence the rest descended, who were lawful ones.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest] It was a glorifying of Christ, to make him an high priest; not as God, for as such no addition can be made to his glory; yea, it was a condescension in him to become a priest: but as man, it was an honour to the human nature to be united to the Son of God; and to be separated from others to this office; and to be called unto it, qualified for it, and invested with it; and to be of the order he was, and to do the work; and the very assistance he had in it, for the accomplishment of it, was a glorifying of him, for which he prayed; and the work being done, he had glory given him by his Father; and an ascription of glory is made to him by angels and saints:

but
(a) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 1. & Maimon, in ibid. §. 3. (b) Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. §. 4. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1.

(z) Misn. Yoma, c. 3. §. 8. & c. 4. §. 2.

but Christ did not take this high and honourable office to himself, nor the glory of it: indeed, he did not receive it from man, nor was he made a priest according to the ceremonial law; yet he did not intrude himself into this office.

But he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee] He appointed him to this office; he sent him to execute it; he anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; he consecrated and established him in it with an oath; and prescribed to him what he should do, suffer, and offer; and declared to him what he might expect as the reward thereof. These words are taken out of *Psalms* ii. 7. see the note on chapter i. 5. and they are not to be considered as constitutive of Christ's priesthood, as if that was intended by the begetting of him as a Son; but as descriptive of the person who called him to it, who stood in the relation of a Father to Christ, and Christ in the relation of a Son to him; therefore the one was very proper to call, and the other a very fit person to be called, to this office, being every way capable of executing it, to the glory of God, and to the good of men.

6 As he saith also in another place, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

As he saith also in another place] Or *psalm*, namely, in *Psalms* cx. 4. that is the same person, even God the Father, who spake the words before cited, also expressed the following:

Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec] That the *psalm* from whence these words are taken belongs to the Messiah, see the note on *Matt.* xxii. 44. and this very passage is applied unto him by the Jewish writers (c); and had not this been the general sense of the Jewish church at this time, the apostle writing to the Hebrews would not have produced it; and it very clearly expresses the priesthood of Christ, the eternity of it, and the order according to which it was; and it being not according to the order of Aaron, but of another, shews the change of the priesthood, and so of the law; of Melchisedec, see the note on chapter vii. 1.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Who in the days of his flesh] Or "of his hu-

manity," as the Arabic version renders it; or "when he was clothed with flesh," as the Syriac version; in the time of his humiliation; when he was attended with the sinless infirmities of the flesh, or human nature; it may take in the whole course of his life on earth, especially the latter part of it: it is not to be concluded from thence, that he has not flesh now, or is not in the flesh; for it is certain that he had flesh after his resurrection; only now he is free from all the infirmities of the flesh, the pains, and sorrows, and griefs of it; which he endured when here on earth.

When he had offered up prayers and supplications] As he often did in many parts of his life, particularly in the garden, and upon the cross, when he offered up himself: and as the days of Christ's flesh were filled up with prayers and supplications, so should ours be also: the word for *supplications*, signifies branches of olive trees, covered with wool (d); which such as sued for peace, carried in their hands, and so came to signify supplications for peace: the manner in which these were offered up by Christ, was

With strong crying and tears] With a most vehement outcry, with a loud voice, as when on the cross; and though there is no mention of his tears at that time, or when in the garden, no doubt but he shed them: All that Christ did, and said, are not written; some things were received by tradition, and by inspiration; Christ wept at other times, and why not at these? And there are some circumstances in his prayers which intimate as much, *Matt.* xxvi. 38. and chapter xxvii. 46. *Luke* xxii. 44. which shews the weight of sin, of sorrow, and of punishment, that lay upon him, and the weakness of the human nature, considered in itself: and it may be observed to our comfort, that as Christ's crying and tears were confined to the days of his flesh, or to the time of his life here on earth, so shall ours be also. Mention is made of, *נפין רובן* "strong prayers (e)" in Jewish writings. The person to whom Christ offered his prayers, is described in the following words,

Unto him that was able to save him from death] From a corporal death, as he could; but that in was otherwise determined; or rather to raise him from the dead; to deliver him from the state of the dead, from the power of death, and the grave, as he did; and so the Syriac version renders it, "to quicken him from death;" to restore him from death to life.

(c) *Moses Hada'san* apud *Galatin.* i. 10. c. 6. *Abot R. Nathan.* c. 34.

(d) *Harpocratian.* Lex. p. 152. *Alexand.* ed *Alex. Genial Dier.* h. 5. c. 31. (e) *Tzeror Hamidbar.* fol. 37. 4. 11. Q

And was heard in that he feared] Or "by fear;" by God, who was the object of his fear, and who is called the fear of Isaac, *Gen. xxxi. 42.* he was always heard by him, and so he was in the garden, and on the cross; and was carried through his sufferings, and was delivered from the fear of death, and was saved from the dominion and power of it, being raised from the dead by his Father: or "he was heard because of his fear, or "reverence;" either because of the dignity and reverence of his person, in which he was had by God; or because of his reverence of his Father.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Though he were a Son] "The Son of God," as the Vulgate Latin version reads; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature, being the only-begotten of the Father, having the same nature and perfections with him.

Yet learned he obedience] Not to his parents, or civil magistrates, though that is true; nor merely to the precepts of the law, which he did; but unto death; through sufferings he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: and this he learnt; not that he was ignorant of the nature of it, nor was he destitute of an obedient disposition to it; but the meaning is, he had an experience of it, and effected it; and which was voluntary, and done in our room and stead; and is the rule and measure of our righteousness before God: and this he learned,

By the things which he suffered] From men, from devils, and from the justice of God. Christ's Sonship did not exempt him from obedience and sufferings; this shews the dignity of Christ's person, that he is the Son of God; not as Mediator; for as such he is a servant; and it would be no wonder that he should learn obedience as a servant; and this shews also the great humility and condescension of Christ in obeying and suffering for us, though so great a person; and likewise the vile nature of sin, and the strictness of divine justice: and we may learn from hence, not to expect to be exempted from sufferings on account of sonship; nor to conclude we are not sons, because we suffer; and that afflictions are instructive, and, by them experience is learned; and the sense here may be, he taught obedience by his sufferings to others, as well as learnt it himself, *Phil. ii. 8.* the apostle using the word in the sense as למד which signifies both "to learn" and "teach."

9 And being made perfect, he became

the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

And being made perfect] In his obedience through sufferings; having completed his obedience, gone through his sufferings, and finished his sacrifice, and being perfectly glorified in heaven.

He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him] The salvation Christ is the author of is eternal; it was resolved upon from eternity, and contrived in it; it was secured in the everlasting covenant, in which not only a Saviour was provided, but blessings both of grace and glory: and it is to eternity; and stands distinguished from a temporal salvation, and is opposed to eternal damnation; it is the salvation of the soul, which is immortal; and it takes in both grace and glory, which are of a durable nature; and the continuance of it is owing to the abiding and lasting virtue of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness: and Christ is the cause or author of this salvation, by his obedience and sufferings; by obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; by the price of his blood, and by the power of his arm; by his death and by his life; by his sacrifice on the cross, and by his intercession in heaven; by bestowing grace here, and glory hereafter: this shews that salvation is done, and that Christ is the sole author of it, and that all the glory of it should be given to him; and those to whom he is the author of salvation, are such as hearken to the voice of his Gospel, and obey him in his ordinances. Christ is not the author of salvation to all men; all men do not obey him; all those whom Christ saves, he brings them to an obedience to himself; for his obedience for them does not exempt them from obedience to him, though their obedience is no cause of their salvation; Christ himself is the alone author of that.

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

על דברתי "according to what is said of him," *Psal. cx. 4.* there is a resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; many things that are said of the one, agree with the other: there is a likeness in Melchisedec to Christ; in his person, and what is said of him, that he was without father and mother; and in his office as a priest, and in the manner of his instalment into it; and in the antiquity, dignity, and perpetuity of it: and this is repeated for the further confirmation of Christ's priesthood, and is a conclusion of the truth of it from sufficient evidence. This does not so much design the constitution of Christ as priest, nor the call of him to that office, as the denomination or furnishing.

furnaming of him a priest of Melchisedec's order, because of the agreement between them; and contains a reason of Christ's being the author of eternal salvation, because he is a priest for ever; and prevents any objections against Christ's priesthood, and opens a way to discourse more largely concerning it.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Of whom we have many things to say] Either of Melchisedec or of Christ, or of his priesthood, or of all these; since the apostle does largely treat of them in the following chapters: he says many things concerning Melchisedec in the seventh chapter, and many things of Christ, and his priesthood, in those that follow. Christ is a large and inexhaustible subject in the Gospel-ministry, and what a Gospel-minister delights to dwell on; and it is a fund and stock from whence he is furnished with things of the greatest usefulness, and of the utmost importance.

And hard to be uttered] As were many things respecting Melchisedec, mentioned in chap. vii. 3. and also concerning Christ, and his priesthood: abstruse and difficult things are to be looked into, considered, searched after, and insisted on: the whole scripture is profitable, and the whole counsel of God is to be declared, and things hard to be explained should be attempted; this is the way to an increase of light and knowledge; though it becomes ministers to consult their own abilities, and the capacity of their hearers, that they do not go beyond them.

Seeing ye are dull of hearing] This dulness of hearing is thought by some to arise from their afflictions; or from their attachment to the law of Moses; or rather from their sluggishness, indolence, and want of industry; and oftentimes this arises from pride and prejudice, and irreverence of the word of God; and frequently from the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers] These Hebrews had had great advantages; they were not only descended from Abraham, and had the law of Moses, and the writings of the Old Testament, but some of them had enjoyed the

ministry of Christ, and however of his apostles; and it was now about thirty years from the day of Pentecost, in which the gifts of the holy Ghost were bestowed in such an extraordinary manner, and a large number were converted, and a church-state settled among them: and therefore, considering the length of time, the opportunities and advantages they had enjoyed, it might have been expected, and indeed it is what should have been, that they would have been teachers of others, some in a private, and some in a public way: from whence it may be observed, that to have time for learning, and yet make no proficiency, is an aggravation of dulness; moreover, that men ought to be hearers, and make some good proficiency in hearing, before they are fit to be teachers of others; also, that persons are not only to hear for their own edification, but for the instruction of others, though all hearers are not designed for public teachers; for to be teachers of others, requires a considerable share of knowledge: to which may be added, that the churches of Christ are the proper seminaries of Gospel-ministers. But this was so far from being the case of these Hebrews, that the apostle says of them,

Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God] By the oracles of God are meant the scriptures, not the law of Moses only, but all the writings of the Old Testament, which were given by the inspiration of God, and are authoritative and infallible; and by the first principles of them are intended, either the first promises in them, concerning the Messiah; or the institutions, rites, and ceremonies of the law, which are sometimes called στοιχια, "elements," Gal. iv. 3, 9. where the same word is used as here; and which were the alphabet and rudiments of the Gospel to the Jews: or else the apostle designs the plain doctrines of the Gospel, which were at first preached unto them, in which they needed to be again instructed, as they were at first; so that instead of going forward, they had rather gone back.

And are become such as have need of milk] Of the types, shadows, and figures of the law, which were suited to the infant state of the church, who by sensible objects were directed to the view of Gospel grace; or of the plain and easier parts of the Gospel, comparable to milk for their purity, sweetness, nourishing nature, and being easy of digestion.

And not of strong meat] Such as the deep things of God, the mysteries of the Gospel; those which are more hard to be understood, received, and digested; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of God's everlasting love, of eternal election and reprobation,

probation, of the person of Christ, the abrogation of the law, &c.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

For every one that useth milk] And sits down contented with the first principles of the Gospel, such as are easily taken in and digested; or makes use of the ceremonial law, as a schoolmaster to teach him the Gospel,

Is unskilful in the word of righteousness] The Gospel, which is a doctrine of righteousness; not of works of righteousness done by men, and of justification by them, or of a man's own righteousness; but of the pure, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Christ: and it is called so, because it is the means of stripping a man of his own righteousness; and of revealing the righteousness of Christ unto him; and of working faith in him to lay hold upon it; and of discovering the agreement there is between the righteousness of Christ, and the justice of God; and of teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly: and such are unskilful in it, who either have no knowledge of the doctrine of justification; of the matter of it, Christ's righteousness: of the form of it, by imputation: and of the date of it, before faith: or have a very confused notion of it, joining their own works with Christ's righteousness for justification, as many judaizing professors did; or who, if they have a notional knowledge of it, have no practical concern in it; do not believe with the heart unto righteousness; have not the experience, sweetness, and power of this doctrine upon them; and do not live lives agreeable to it.

For he is a babe] This word is used sometimes by way of commendation, and is expressive of some good characters of the saints; such as harmlessness and inoffensiveness, humility and meekness, a desire after the sincere milk of the word, freedom from rancour and malice, hypocrisy and guile; but here it is used by way of reproach, and denotes levity and inconstancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digestion of strong meat, and incapacity to take care of themselves, as standing in need of tutors and governors.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age] Or perfect; see 1 Cor. ii. 6. This does not

intend a perfection of justification, for though some have a greater degree of faith than others, and a clearer discovery of their justification, yet babes in Christ are as perfectly justified, as more grown and experienced believers; not a perfection of sanctification, for there is no perfection of holiness but in Christ; and though the work of sanctification may be in greater perfection in one saint, than in another, yet all are imperfect in this life; and as to a perfection of parts, babes have this as well as adult persons: but it designs a perfection of knowledge; for though none are entirely perfect, yet some have arrived to a greater degree of the knowledge of Gospel-mysteries than others, and to these the strong meat of the Gospel belongs; they are capable of understanding the more mysterious parts of the Gospel; of searching into the deep things of God; and of receiving and digesting the more sublime truths of the christian religion.

Even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil] That is, their spiritual senses, the internal senses of the understanding and judgment, signified by external ones; as, by seeing the Son; hearing the voice of Christ; savouring or smelling a sweet odour in the things of God and Christ; tasting that the Lord is gracious; feeling and handling the word of life, as these are held forth in the everlasting Gospel: and these being exercised on their proper object, by use an habit is contracted; and such are qualified for discerning, as between moral good and evil, and the worse and better state of the church, and between Law and Gospel, so between the doctrines of Christ, and the doctrines of men; who find they differ: the doctrines of Christ such experienced persons find to be good, wholesome, nourishing, and salutary; and the doctrines of men to be evil, to eat as does a canker, and to be pernicious, poisonous, and damnable; and the discernment they make, and the judgment they form, are not according to the dictates of carnal reason, but according to the scriptures of truth, and their own experience.

CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to rest in the rudiments of the christian religion they had learned; and much less to lay them again in the foundation after the Jewish manner, of which he instances in six particulars; but to seek after a perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, which, under a divine permission, was his determination to do, &c. 1, 2, 3. which was the best method to prevent the apostasy he dissuades from; by giving the

the characters of apostates, shewing how far they may go in the knowledge of divine things, and yet fall away; by asserting the impossibility of their repentance and recovery, with the reason of it, taken from the blackness of their crimes, *ψ*. 4, 5, 6. and the difference between them and true believers, he illustrates by two sorts of earth, the one takes in the rain that comes down from heaven, and brings forth herbs for the use of its dresser, and is blessed of God; such are true believers in Christ, *ψ*. 7. the other bears thorns and briars, and is rejected and cursed, and in the issue burned; and to such earth the above apostates may be compared, *ψ*. 8. but lest the believing Hebrews, such as were truly gracious among them, should conclude that this was their case, and that it was desperate; and lest they should think the apostle had an ill opinion of them, he declares, he was otherwise persuaded of them, and hoped and believed they were interested in the things of salvation, *ψ*. 9. the reasons of which persuasion are taken from the work of grace, which was wrought in them; from their laborious love they shewed to the name of God, and to his people, and which they continued to shew; and from the righteousness of God in not forgetting all this, *ψ*. 10. And then he proceeds to exhort them to diligence in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, that so they might arrive to a full assurance of hope, *ψ*. 11. and not to indulge slothfulness, but to be followers of the saints that were gone before them; whose character is, that through faith and patience they had inherited the promises, things the apostle would have those believers imitate them in, *ψ*. 12. and particularly instances in Abraham, the father of this people, and of all believers; who having a promise from God, to which an oath was annexed, patiently waited for it, and obtained it, *ψ*. 13—15. and having made mention of an oath, the apostle takes notice of the nature and use of one among men, *ψ*. 16. and of the design of God in making use of one himself, which was to confirm his promise, and shew its immutability to the heirs of it; and that by observing these two immutable things, which could never fail, they might have solid and abiding comfort; even all such, who under a sense of danger, flee to Christ for refuge, who is the ground of hope proposed to them in the Gospel, to lay hold upon, *ψ*. 17, 18. and because of the firmness of the grace of hope, as it is conversant with Christ, and is cast on him, the good ground of it, it is compared to an anchor; and is said to

be sure and steadfast, and to enter within the vail, where Christ is gone as a forerunner; and which is an encouragement to that grace to enter in after him; who is farther described by his name, Jesus, by his office as an high priest, and by the order of which he is, that of Melchisedec, *ψ*. 19, 20. which is mentioned, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning him, in the next chapter.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ] The Gospel is *the doctrine of Christ*, and is so called, because Christ, as God, is the author of it; as mediator, he received it from his Father; as man, he was the preacher of it; and he is also the sum and substance of it: the *principles* of this *doctrine*, are either the easier parts of the Gospel, called *milk* in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which are not to be left with dislike and contempt, nor so as to be forgotten, nor so as not to be recurred to at proper times; but so as not to abide in and stick here, without going further: or rather, the ceremonies of the law, which were the elements of the Jews religion, and the *beginning*, as the word may be here rendered, of the doctrine of Christ; which were shadowy and typical of Christ, and taught the Jews the truths of the Gospel concerning Christ; in these the believing Jews were very desirous of sticking, and of abiding by them, and of continuing them in the Gospel-church; whereas they were to be left, since they had had their use, and had answered what they were designed for, and were now abolished by Christ.

Let us go on unto perfection] In a comparative sense, to a more perfect knowledge of things, which the clear revelation and ministry of the Gospel lead unto; and which the rites and ceremonies, types and figures of the law, never could:

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works] The Syriac version reads this by way of interrogation, "Do ye lay again, &c." and makes the third verse to be an answer to it: the phrase, "not laying again the foundation," is to be read in connection, not only with this article of repentance, but with each of the other five articles, the foundation of which is no more to be laid again, than this: and not laying it again, either means not teaching it, and so refers to the apostle,

apostle, and other ministers of the word, who should not insist upon the following things, at least not stick there, but go on to deliver things more sublime and grand; or not hearing it, and so refers to the Hebrews, who should seek after a more perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, than the following articles exhibited to them: and the several parts of this foundation, which are not to be laid again ministerially, by preachers, or attended to by hearers, design either the first things, with which the Gospel-dispensation was ushered in; or rather, and which I take to be the true sense, the general principles and practices of the Jews under the former dispensation; for these are not the six principles of the christian religion, as they are commonly called, but so many articles of the Jewish creed; some of which were peculiar to the Jews, and others common to them, with us christians: thus, *repentance from dead works*, does not intend evangelical repentance, the doctrine of which is to be ministerially laid, and the grace itself to be exercised over and over again; but a repentance which arose from, and was signified by the sacrifices of slain beasts; for by them the Jews were taught the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sin; and in, and over them did they confess their iniquities; yea, every beast that was slain for sacrifice, carried in it a conviction of sin, an acknowledgment of guilt; and it was tacitly owning, that they, for whom the creature was slain, deserved to be treated as that was, and die as that did. So the Jews (*f*) say, "When a man sacrifices a beast, he thinks in his own heart, I am rather a beast than this; for I am he that hath sinned, and for the sin which I have committed I bring this; and it is more fitting that the man should be sacrificed, rather than the beast; and so it appears that, יורש על ידי קרבנו חוה "by the means of his offering he repents." But now under the Gospel-dispensation, believing Jews, as these were to whom the apostle writes, were not to learn the doctrine of repentance from slain beasts, or to signify it in this way; since repentance and remission of sins were preached most clearly to them in the name of Christ: nor were they to lay again another part of this foundation, or a second article of the Jewish creed.

[*And of faith toward God*] Which article is expressed in language agreeable to the Jewish dispensation; whereas evangelical faith is usually called the faith of Christ, or faith in Christ, or towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but this respects faith in God, as the God of Israel: hence says our Lord to his disciples, who were all Jews, Ye

believe in God; ye have been taught, and used to believe in God, as the God of Israel; believe also in me, as his Son, and the Messiah, and the Mediator between God and man, *John* xiv. 1. so that now they were not only to have faith towards God, as the God of Israel, and to teach and receive that doctrine; but to have faith in Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners, without the intermediate use of sacrifices.

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

[*Of the doctrine of baptisms*] Some read this divinely, "baptism and doctrine," as the Ethiopic version; as if the one respected the ordinance of baptism, and the other the ministry of the word; but it is best to read them conjunctively: and by which most understand the Gospel ordinance of water-baptism, so called by a change of number, the plural for the singular, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, who render it *baptism*; or because of the different persons baptized, and times of baptizing, as some; or because of the trine immersion, as others; or because of the threefold baptism of spirit, blood, and water, which have some agreement with each other; or because of the baptism of John and Christ, though they are one and the same; or because of the inward and outward baptism, the one sitting and qualifying for the other; and so the doctrine of it is thought to respect the necessity, use, and end of it: but since there is but one baptism, and the above reasons for the plural expression are not solid and sufficiently satisfying, it is best to interpret this of the divers baptisms among the Jews, spoken of in *Heb.* ix. 10. which had a doctrine in them, to that people; teaching them the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, and leading them to it, to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness; but now, since this blood was shed, they were no more to teach nor learn the doctrine of cleansing by the blood of Christ this way; nor any more to be led unto it through these divers baptisms, ablutions, and purifications.

[*And of laying on of hands*] The foundation of this was to be no more laid, nor the doctrine of it to be any longer taught, and learned in the way it had been; for not the rite, but the doctrine of laying on of hands, is here intended; and it has no reference to the rite of laying on of hands by the apostles, either on private persons, or officers of churches; for what was the doctrine of such a rite, is not easy to say; but to the rite of laying on of hands of the priests, and of the people, upon the head of sacrifices; which had

(f) Nizzachon Vet. p. 11. Ed. Wagenfeld.

had a doctrine in it, even the doctrine of the imputation of sin to Christ, the great sacrifice. It was usual with the Jews (*g*), to call the imposition of hands upon the sacrifice, simply, סמיכה "laying on of hands;" and they understood by it the transferring of sin from the persons that laid on hands, to the sacrifice, on which they were laid; and that hereby, as they express it, sins were separated from them, and, as it were, put upon the sacrifice (*h*); but now believers were no longer to be taught or to learn the great doctrine of the imputation of sin by this rite and ceremony; since Christ has been made sin for them, and has had their sins imputed to him, and has bore them in his own body on the tree.

And of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment] Articles of faith which distinguish the Jews from the Gentiles, who were greatly strangers to a future state, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment to come: these are doctrines of pure revelation, and were taught under the Old Testament, and were believed by the generality of the Jews; and are articles which they hold in common with us christians; yet the believing Hebrews were not to rest in the knowledge of these things, and in the smaller degrees of light they had in them under the former dispensation; but were to go on to perfection, and bear forward towards a greater share of knowledge of these, and other more sublime doctrines of grace; since life and immortality are more clearly brought to light by Christ through the Gospel.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

That is, leave the rites and ceremonies of the law, which were the rudiments, or first principles of the Gospel, and go on to a more perfect knowledge of Gospel truths; and not lay again, as the foundation of the ministry, or insist upon them as if they were the main things, even the above articles of the Jewish creed, especially in the way and manner in which they had been taught and learnt: the sense is, that the apostle and his brethren in the ministry were determined to insist upon the more solid and substantial parts of the Gospel, and which tended to bring on their hearers to perfection; and that it became the believing Hebrews to seek after a greater degree of knowledge under the ministry of the word. It is, or at least should be, the determination of a Gospel minister, to preach Christ, and the great truths of the Gospel; and wheresoever God has called him to it, though there may be many adversaries;

and though he may be reproached, calumniated, and deserted: resolution in preaching the Gospel, and adhering to it, is very commendable in a minister; and it is very laudable in hearers to attend to it, stand by it, and search further into it; and which both should determine upon with a regard to the will of God, *if God permit*: God's permission is much to be observed in the ministry of the word, in giving gifts to men, in placing them out here and there, where they shall exercise them, in directing them to subjects, and in making their ministry useful and successful: and it may be observed in general, that nothing can be done, or come to pass, good or bad, but what God permits or wills to be done; no good things, no actions, civil, natural, moral, or spiritual; no evil things, the evil of punishment, afflictions, the persecutions of wicked men, the temptations of Satan, heresies, and even immoralities.

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost,

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it "baptized;" and the word is thought to be so used in chapter x. 32. And indeed baptism was called very early *illumination* by the ancients, as by Justin Martyr (*i*), and Clemens Alexandrinus (*k*), because only enlightened persons were the proper subjects of it; and the word *once* here used seems to confirm this sense, since baptism, when rightly administered, was not repeated; but then this sense depends upon an use of a word which it is not certain did as yet obtain; nor does the apostle take notice of baptism in a parallel place, chapter x. 26, 27. This gave rise to, and seems to favour the error of Novatus, that those who fall into sin after baptism are to be cut off from the communion of the church, and never more to be restored unto it; contrary to the promises of God to returning backsliders, and contrary to facts, as well as to the directions of Christ, and his apostles, to receive and restore such persons; and such a notion tends to set aside the intercession of Christ for fallen believers, and to plunge them into despair: it is better therefore to retain the word *enlightened*, in its proper sense, and to understand it of persons enlightened with Gospel-knowledge; there are some who are savingly enlightened by the Spirit of God, to see the impurity of their hearts and actions, and their impotency;

(g) Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. §. 3. & Bartenora in ibid.

(h) R. Levi ben Gerson in Exod. fol. 109. 1. & in Lev. fol. 117. 2.

(i) Apolog. 2. p. 94.

(k) Prolegom. l. 1. c. 6. p. 93.

potency to perform that which is good, the imperfection of their own righteousness to justify them, their lost state and condition by nature, and to see Christ and salvation by him, and their interest in it; and these being *once enlightened*, never become darkness, or ever so fall as to perish; for if God had a mind to destroy them, he would never have shewn them these things, and therefore cannot be the persons designed here; unless we render the words, as the Syriac version does, "it is impossible"—רָחֵם נִסְיוֹן "that they should sin again;" so as to die spiritually, lose the grace of God, and stand in need of a new work upon them, which would be impossible to be done: but rather such are meant, who are so enlightened as to see the evil effects of sin, but not the evil that is in sin; to see the good things which come by Christ, but not the goodness that is in Christ; so as to reform externally, but not to be sanctified internally; to have knowledge of the Gospel doctrinally, but not experimentally; yea, to have such light into it, as to be able to preach it to others, and yet be destitute of the grace of God.

And have tasted of the heavenly gift] Either faith, or a justifying righteousness, or the pardon of sin, or eternal life; which are all spiritual and heavenly gifts of grace, and which true believers have real tastes of; and hypocrites please themselves with, having some speculative notions about them, and some desires after them, arising from a natural principle of self-love. Some think the holy Ghost is intended; but rather Christ himself, the unspeakable gift of God's love, given from heaven, as the bread of life. Now there are some who have a saving spiritual taste of this gift; for though God's people, whilst unregenerate, have no such taste; their taste is vitiated by sin, and it is not changed; sin is the food they live upon, in which they take an imaginary pleasure, and disrelish every thing else; but when regenerated, their taste is changed, sin is rendered loathsome to them; and they have a real gust of spiritual things, and especially of Christ, and find a real delight and pleasure in feeding by faith upon him; whereby they live upon him, and are nourished up unto eternal life, and therefore cannot be the persons here spoken of: but there are others who taste, but dislike what they taste; have no true love to Christ, and faith in him; or have only a carnal taste of him, know him only after the flesh, or externally, not inwardly and experimentally; or they have only a superficial taste, such as is opposed to eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, by faith, which is proper to true believers; the gust they have is but temporary, and arises from selfish principles.

And were made partakers of the holy Ghost] Not his person, nor his special grace; there are some who so partake of him, as to be united to him, in whom he becomes the principle of spiritual life, and motion: such have the fruits of the Spirit, and communion with him; they enjoy his personal presence and inhabitation in them; they have received him as a Spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration and sanctification, as the Spirit of faith, and as a Comforter; and as a spirit of adoption, and the earnest and seal of future glory; but then such can never so fall away as to perish: a believer indeed may be without the sensible presence of the Spirit; the graces of the Spirit may be very low, as to their exercise; and they may not enjoy his comforts, gracious influences, and divine assistance; but the Spirit of God never is, in the above sense, in a castaway; where he takes up his dwelling he never quits it; if such could perish, not only his own glory, but the glory of the Father and of the Son, would be lost likewise: but by the holy Ghost is sometimes meant, the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary, 1 Cor. xii. 4—11. and so here; and men may be said to be partakers of the holy Ghost, to whom he gives wisdom and prudence in things natural and civil; the knowledge of things divine and evangelical, in an external way; the power of working miracles, of prophesying, of speaking with tongues, and of the interpretation of tongues; for the extraordinary gifts of the holy Ghost seem chiefly designed, which some, in the first times of the Gospel, were partakers of, who had no share in special grace, Matt. vii. 22, 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

And have tasted the good word of God] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential Word of God, who seems to be intended before by the heavenly gift; but rather, either the scriptures of truth in general, which are the word of God, endited by him, and contain his mind and will; which he makes use of for conviction, conversion, instruction, and comfort; and which are preserved by him: and these are a *good word*; they come from him who is good; they are a revelation of good things; they make known things true, pleasant, and profitable: or else the Gospel in particular, of which God is the author; and in which is a wonderful display of his wisdom and grace; and which he owns and blesses for his own glory, and the good of others: and this is a *good word*, the same with רָחֵם טוֹב "good matter, or word," in Psalm xlv. 1. מִנְּהָם טוֹב "my good word, or the word of my goodness," in the Targum on

Isaiah

Isaiab lv. 11. for it is the word of righteousness, reconciliation, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. And there is a special and spiritual taste of this good word, which is delightful, relishing, and nourishing; and such who have it can never totally and finally fall away; because they who taste it, so as to eat and digest it, and be nourished by it, to them it becomes the engrafted word, which is able to save them: but there is such a taste of this word as is disrelishing, as in profane sinners, and open opposers and persecutors of the word, or as in hypocrites and formal professors; which is only an assent to the scriptures, as the revelation of God, or a superficial knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel without the experience of them, and a temporal faith in them, and a natural affection for them, and pleasedness with them for a time; as the Jews, and Herod with John's ministry, and the stony-ground hearers.

And the powers of the world to come] Meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of; or the ultimate state of glory and happiness, the powers of which are the immortality, incorruption, and glory of the body, the perfect holiness and knowledge of the soul, entire freedom from all evils of every kind, full communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a compleat enjoyment of all happiness for ever; which hypocrites may have a notional knowledge of, a natural desire after, and delight in the contemplation and hope of, as Balaam had; or rather the *duyayus*, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Gospel-dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews world to come; see the note on chap. ii. 5. are intended; which many, as Judas and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere christians, or true believers.

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

If they shall fall away] This is not supposed of true believers, as appears from v. 9. nor is it to be supposed of them that they may fall totally and finally; they may indeed fall, not only into afflictions, and temptations, but into sin; and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, and from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel; but not irrecoverably: for they are held and secured by a threefold cord, which can never be broken; by God the Father, who has loved them with an everlasting love, has chosen them in Christ, se-

cured them in the covenant of grace, keeps them by his power, has given them grace, and will give them glory; and by the Son, who has undertook for them, redeemed and purchased them, prays and makes preparations in heaven for them, they are built on him, united to him, and are his jewels, whom he will preserve; and by the holy Ghost, whose grace is incorruptible, whose personal indwelling is for ever, who himself is the earnest and seal of the heavenly inheritance, and who having begun, will finish the good work of grace: but *falling away* so as to perish, may be supposed, and is true of many professors of religion; who may fall from the profession of the Gospel they have made, and from the truth of it, and into an open denial of it; yea, into an hatred and persecution of what they once received the external knowledge of; and so shall fall short of heaven, and into condemnation: for,

To renew them again unto repentance] Is a thing impossible: by *repentance* is meant, not baptism of repentance; nor admission to a solemn form of public repentance in the church; nor a legal repentance, but an evangelical one: and so to be *renewed* unto it is not to be baptized again, or to be restored anew to the church by repentance and absolution; but must be understood either of renovation of the soul, in order to repentance; or of the reforming of the outward conversation, as an evidence of it; or of a renewing of the exercise of the grace of repentance: and to be *renewed again* to repentance does not suppose that persons may have true repentance and lose it; for though truly penitent persons may lose the exercise of this grace for a time, yet the grace itself can never be lost: moreover, these apostates before described, had only a shew of repentance, a counterfeit one; such as Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas had; and consequently, the renewing of them again to repentance, is to that which they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions unto; now to renew them to a true repentance, which they once made a profession of, the apostle says, is a thing impossible: the meaning of which is not only that it is difficult; or that it is rare and unusual; or that it is unsuitable and improper; but it is absolutely impossible: it is impossible to these men to renew themselves to repentance; renovation is the work of the holy Ghost, and not of man; and repentance is God's gift, and not in man's power; and it is impossible for ministers to renew them, to restore and bring them back, by true repentance; yea, it is impossible to God himself, not through any impotence in him, but from the nature of the sin these men are guilty of; for by the high, though outward attainments they arrive

unto, according to the description of them, their sin is the sin against the holy Ghost, for which no sacrifice can be offered up, and of which there is no remission, and so no repentance; for these two go together, and for which prayer is not to be made; see *Matt.* xii. 32. *Heb.* x. 26, 27. 1 *John* v. 16. and chiefly because to renew such persons to repentance, is repugnant to the determined will of God, who cannot go against his own purposes and resolutions; and so the Jews (!) speak of repentance being withheld by God from Pharaoh, and from the people of Israel; of which they understand *Exod.* ix. 16. *Isaiah* vi. 10. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16. and say, that "when the holy blessed God withholds repentance from a sinner לֹא יִשְׁכַּח "he cannot repent;" but must die in "his wickedness which he first committed of his own will;" and they further observe (m), that he that profanes the name of God, has it not in his power to depend on repentance, nor can his iniquity be expiated on the day of atonement, or be removed by chastisement.

Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame] Who is truly and properly God, begotten of the Father, and of the same nature with him, in whom he greatly delights: this is Christ's highest name and title; and it was for asserting himself to be the Son of God, that he was crucified; and his being so, puts an infinite virtue in his sufferings and death; and it heightens the sin of the Jews, and of these apostates, in crucifying him. He was once crucified, and it is both impossible and unnecessary that he should be, properly speaking, crucified afresh, or again; it is impossible, because he is risen from the dead, and will never die more; it is unnecessary, because he has finished and completed what he suffered the death of the cross for; but men may be said to crucify him again, when by denying him to be the Son of God, they justify the crucifixion of him on that account; and when they lessen and vilify the virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and when both by errors and immoralities they cause him to be blasphemed, and evil spoken of; and when they persecute him in his members: and this may be said to be done to themselves afresh; not that Christ was crucified for them before, but that they now crucify him again, as much as in them lies; or with themselves, in their own breasts and minds, and to their own destruction. Now this being the case, it makes their renewal to repentance impossible; because, as before observed, the sin they commit is unpardonable; it is a denial of Christ, who

gives repentance; and such who sin it must arrive to such hardness of heart as to admit of no repentance; and it is just with God to give up such to a final impenitence, as those who knowingly and out of malice and envy crucified Christ, had neither pardon nor repentance; and besides, this sin of denying Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of men, after so much light and knowledge, precludes the way of salvation, unless Christ was to be crucified again, which is impossible; for so the Syriac version connects this clause with the word *impossible*, as well as a foregoing one, rendering it, "it is impossible to crucify the Son of God again, and to put him to shame;" and so the Arabic version. Christ was put to open shame at the time of his apprehension, prosecution, and crucifixion; and so he is by such apostates, who, was he on earth, would treat him in the same manner the Jews did; and who do traduce him as an impostor and a deceiver, and give the lie to his doctrines, and expose him by their lives, and persecute him in his saints.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it] Here the apostle illustrates what he had before been speaking of, by a simile taken from the earth, to which men in general answer, who are of the earth; earthy, and unregenerate men and carnal professors are of earthly minds; they are like the earth when it was rude and without form, and cursed by God; and are as insensible as the earth: but the earth is particularly distinguished into that which is fruitful, and which is unfruitful; and the former is spoken of in this verse, to which true believers in Christ agree; who are the good ground, into which the seed of God's word is received, and brings forth fruit; these are God's tillage or husbandry: and the rain that comes upon them may signify either the grace of Christ, which, like rain, is an instance of his sovereignty, and what he alone can give, and not the vanities of the Gentiles; and which he gives to persons undeserving of it; and which refreshes, revives, and makes fruitful: or else Christ himself, *Psalms* lxxii. 6. *Hosea* vi. 3. whose first coming was, like rain, much desired, and long expected; and so is his spiritual coming very desirable, delightful, refreshing, and fruitful: or rather his Gospel, *Deut.* xxxii. 2. *Isaiah* lv. 9. which comes from above, and is the means of softening hard hearts; of reviving distressed and disconsolate minds, and of making barren souls fruitful;

(l) Marmon. *Hilchot Teshuba*, c. 6. §. 3.

(m) Vid. R. David Kimchi in *Id.* xxii. 14.

fruitful; which is done by *coming oft* upon them, at first conversion, and afterwards, alluding to the former and latter rain; and may refer to the receiving of more grace, even grace for grace, out of Christ's fulness, through the ministration of the word, which is drank in by faith, under the influence of the Spirit of God.

And bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed] God the Father, who is the husbandman, and ministers of the Gospel, who are labourers under him; and where the Gospel comes in power, it brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, the fruits meet for repentance; and which are to the glory of God the Father, and are answerable to the means he makes use of, the ministry of the word and ordinances; and no man can bring forth fruit without Christ, his Spirit, and grace: and such earth, or those signified by it,

Receiveth blessing from God] Both antecedent to all this, and which is the cause of fruitfulness; and as consequent upon it, for such receive more grace, even all the blessings of grace, and at last the blessing of glory; and all this being in a way of receiving, shews it to be of gift, and of pure grace.

8 But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

But that which beareth thorns and briars] To which wicked men answer; who are unfruitful and unprofitable, and are hurtful, pricking and grieving, by their wicked lives and conversations; by their bitter and reproachful words; and by their violent and cruel persecutions; and particularly carnal professors, and especially apostates, such as before described; for to such earth professors of religion may be compared, who are worldly, slothful, defrauding and over-reaching, carnal and wanton; as also heretical men, and such as turn from the faith, deny it, and persecute the saints: and the things or actions produced by them are aptly expressed by *thorns and briars*; such as errors, heresies, and evil works of all kinds; and which shew that the seed of the word was never sown in their hearts, and that that which they bear or throw out, is natural to them: and such earth

Is rejected] As such men are, both by the church, and by God himself; or *reprobate*, as they are concerning the faith, and to every good work; and are given up by God to a reprobate mind.

And is nigh unto cursing] And such men are cursed already by the law, being under its sentence

of curse and condemnation; and are nigh to the execution of it; referring either to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was near at hand; or to the final judgment, when they shall hear, *Go, ye cursed.*

Whose end is to be burned] With everlasting and unquenchable fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you] The apostle addresses the believing Hebrews, as *beloved*; being beloved by the Lord, not as the descendants of Abraham, but as the elect of God, and so as loved with an everlasting love; and which might be known to themselves, by its being sown abroad in their hearts, and by their being called by grace, and by their love to him and to his people: and from hence they might conclude, they should not fall away, as the apostates before spoken of; since in consequence of being beloved by God, they were chosen in Christ unto salvation; Christ was given to die for them; they had the Spirit sent down into their hearts; they were justified, pardoned, and adopted; nor could they be separated from the love of God: and the apostle also so calls them, because they were beloved by him, not merely as being his countrymen, but as saints; and this he says to testify his affection to them; to shew that what he said was not from hatred of them, or prejudice to them; and that his exhortations, cautions, and reproofs, might be better taken; and particularly that they might credit what he here says, that he was *persuaded better things* of them, than what he had said of others in *1. 4—6.* even such as are expressed in *1. 10.* he was persuaded they had the true grace of God; whereas the abovementioned persons had only gifts, when in the height of their profession; and the least degree of grace is better than the greatest gifts men can be possessed of: grace makes a man a good man, not gifts; a man may have great gifts and not be a good man; grace is useful to a man's self, gifts are chiefly useful to others; grace makes men fruitful, when gifts leave them barren in the knowledge of Christ; grace is lasting, when gifts fail, and cease, and vanish away; grace will abide the fire of persecution, when gifts will not; grace is saving, gifts are not.

And things that accompany salvation] Which enter into salvation; are ingredients in it, and parts of it, and with which salvation is connected, such

as faith, love, &c. or which mutually touch or follow one another in the chain of salvation; as to be predestinated, justified, called, adopted, sanctified, and at last glorified.

Though we thus speak] Concerning others, as in the preceding verses: the hard things spoken by him of some, were consistent with such persuasions in general; for there might be some among them to whom the aforesaid characters belonged; and saying such things might be a means to make others watchful and careful.

10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

For God is not unrighteous] He is just and true, righteous in all his ways and works; there is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness in him; and this the apostle makes a reason of his strong persuasion of better things concerning the believing Hebrews; because he was well satisfied of the good work upon them, and he was assured that God was not unrighteous or unfaithful.

To forget your work] Which is not to be understood of any good work done by them, for these are generally expressed in the plural number; and besides, these, if at all, are designed in the next clause; moreover, external good works, or such as appear to men to be so, are performed by hypocrites; nor can they be said to be better things, at least, not such as men are saved by: men may fall from these; and supposing them intended, the merit of works cannot be established, as is attempted from hence by the Papists; for the apostle could only consider them as fruits, not as causes of salvation; they are imperfect, and cannot justify, and therefore cannot save; they do not go before to procure salvation, but follow after, and at most but accompany; and though God does remember, and not forget them, this is owing to his grace, and not to their merit; God's righteousness in remembering them, regards not a debt of justice, but a point of faithfulness: but this is to be understood of the work of God upon them, called in scripture a good work, and the work of faith; and is elsewhere joined, as here, with the labour of love; see 1 *Thess.* i. 3. and this might be called their work, not because wrought by them, but because it was wrought in them; and the grace that came along with it was exercised by them: now from hence the apostle might be persuaded of better things of them, even such as accompany salvation; since this work is a fruit

of everlasting and unchangeable love, and is itself immortal, and the beginning of eternal life; and particularly faith is the effect of electing grace; shall never fail; is the means of the saints' preservation; and is connected with everlasting salvation: it follows,

And labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name] The word *labour* is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: this may be understood either of love to God, the name of God being put for himself; who is to be loved for his own sake, on account of the perfections of his nature, as well as for the works of his hands; and which is to be shewed for the sake of glorifying him; and this love is laborious; it sets a man to work for God; nor are any works to be regarded but what spring from love to God, and to his name; and from hence the apostle might entertain a good hope of these persons, since their love to God was an effect of God's love to them, is a part of the work of grace, and cannot be lost; all things work together for good to such as love God; and these have a crown of life promised unto them: or else it may be understood of love to the saints, as follows,

In that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister] In seeking both their temporal and spiritual good; and though all men in general are to be loved, yet especially the saints, who are set apart by God, whose sins are expiated by Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit; and love to them being laborious, and appearing in many instances, and this shewn for the Lord's sake, for his name sake, might lead the apostle more strongly to conclude better things of them, even things of a saving nature; since charity or love to the saints is better than gifts, and is the evidence of grace, of passing from death to life, and of being the disciples of Christ; see 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2, 3.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence] In the constant exercise of the graces of faith and love, and in ministering to the necessities of the saints: there is a spiritual labour, diligence, and industry to be used by the saints; and former diligence is a motive to future; and is a means of attaining to full assurance, as appears by what follows; and this is to be shewn for the glory of God, for the evidence of the above graces, and for an example and encouragement to other saints: and the persons addressed being *every one*, this shews the apostle's impartiality in his exhortations, and served to remove all groundless suspicions

picious in particular persons; and the manner of his addressing them shews his hearty concern for their welfare, his mildness and gentleness towards them, and his design to encourage them to go forward; and that his exhortation might have the greater weight, he uses the plural *we*: and this exhortation, put in this form, moreover shews that what he had said before, had no tendency in some things to encourage despair, or in others carelessness and indolence, and what he had in view in the whole was, that they might arrive to the full assurance of hope unto the end; not only that they might keep up an hope, but attain to the full assurance of it; as to interest in the love and grace of God; in the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; in God, as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; and as to the truth of the work of grace upon their souls, and their right and meetness for the possession of eternal glory and happiness: the phrase *unto the end*, may either respect the continuance of the grace of assurance: or refer to the shewing forth of their diligence and industry in ministering to the saints, as they had done, to the end of their lives.

12 That ye be not slothful; but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

That ye be not slothful] With respect to hearing the word, and attendance on every ordinance; with respect to the use of means for the increase of knowledge, faith, and hope; and with respect to ministering to the saints; but on the contrary, should take every opportunity of improvement and doing good.

But followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises] Or things promised; not the land of Canaan, nor the coming of the Messiah; but either grace and salvation by Christ; or eternal life, which is expressed by a promise, to shew that it is not by any works, or merits of men; that it is wholly of grace, and shall certainly be enjoyed: and it is expressed in the plural number *promises*, because it is the grand promise, which is inclusive of all others; and because it has been given out at various times, and in different manners: and the possession of it being signified by *inheriting*, it shews that this is their Father's gift and legacy, which they have as children; and which comes to them through the death of Christ; and of which the Spirit is the seal; and comes not by works of righteousness done by them: and the means through which saints that are gone before are come to the enjoyment of this happiness, are *faith and patience*; not that faith is the cause

of, or what gives right to the inheritance, but it designs a course and walk of believing, at the end of which, saints come to glory; and faith is connected with salvation, and salvation with that; and through faith believers are preserved unto it: and patience is joined with faith, as a fruit and evidence of it; and supposes troubles which are patiently endured before men come to the possession of the inheritance: now the apostle exhorts these Hebrews to be followers and imitators of such, in diligence, faith, and patience, when they need not doubt of inheriting the same promised blessedness they do.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

For when God made promise to Abraham] The apostle proposes Abraham as a pattern, because he was the father of these Hebrews, and of all believers; and because they were interested in the promise made to him, and had a right to the same blessing with him; and because he was remarkable for his faith and patience: *the promise made to him* is not that in *Genesis* xii. 1, 2, 3. nor that in *Genesis* xv. 1; 4, 5, 13, 14. but that in *Genesis* xxii. 16, 17, for that only had an oath annexed to it: and this was made by Jesus Christ, there called the angel of the Lord, and here God; and who is truly and properly so; and than whom there is none greater; and who elsewhere, as here, is said to swear by himself, *Isaiah* xlv. 23. as follows:

Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself] Swearing is ascribed to a divine person after the manner of men, and in condescension to them; and who is never introduced swearing, but in matters of moment and of great importance; the note of Philo the Jew (*n*) on the passage in *Genesis* xxii. from whence the following words are cited, is worthy of observation, being very near the apostle's words; "Well does he (God) confirm the promise with an oath, and with an oath that becomes God; for you see that God does not swear by another, for nothing is better than himself; but by himself, who is the best of all: But some have suggested as if it was inconvenient to swear, for an oath is taken for the sake of faith; but God alone is faithful," &c.

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.

Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee] Which is expressive of the certainty of the blessings; the reality

reality and substantiality of them; the abundance of them, and the continuance of the same: and of this nature are all spiritual blessings; as to be chosen of God; to have God to be a covenant God and Father; to be justified, pardoned, adopted, and sanctified, and so have a right and title to eternal happiness.

And multiplying, I will multiply thee] Meaning both in his natural and spiritual seed, which has had its accomplishment.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

And so, after he had patiently endured] He waited long for a son, from whom the Messiah was to spring, after he had had the promise of one; and he endured many afflictions with patience, in his journeys from place to place, throughout his life to the end.

He obtained the promise] He was greatly blessed in temporal things; he lived to see the son of the promise, and his sons; he saw the day of Christ by faith, and now inherits the heavenly glory, which is the thing chiefly designed.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

For men verily swear by the greater] These words contain a reason why God swore by himself, and why his promises, having an oath annexed to them, ought to be believed. Men, when they swear, they swear by the greater; not by themselves, as God does, because there is one greater than they; not by any of the creatures on earth, nor by the angels in heaven, but by God; because he is the God of truth, the searcher of hearts, and who can take vengeance on perjurers: and an oath may lawfully be taken, when it is truth that is sworn to, and is just and good; and in cases of weight and moment; and in what is possible and right to perform; and when it is done with deliberation, in the fear of God, with a view to his glory, and the good of men: for an oath is of a moral nature, what God has commanded, and he himself has taken; it has been used by Christ, and by the saints of the Old and New Testament; and is prophesied of the New-Testament-saints, as what they should practise; and is a part of religious worship.

And an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife] It is used to confirm things that are doubtful, and in dispute; and to put an end to strife and contention; so Philo (p) the Jew says,

“By an oath things doubtful are determined, and things uncertain are confirmed, and what were not believed receive credit.” The manner in which an oath was taken among the Jews, to which, the apostle, writing to such, must be thought to have respect, was this; “He that swore took the book of the law in his hand, and he stood and swore by the name (of God) or by his surnames; and the judges did not suffer any one to swear but in the holy tongue; and thus he said, Behold, I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is Merciful and Gracious, that I do not owe thee man any thing (q).” The Hebrew word שבעה used for an oath, is of the root שבע which signifies to fill, satiate, satisfy; for an oath being taken about matters in controversy, not clear but doubtful, gives content unto and satisfies the minds of men; and the same word also signifies seven, a number of fulness and perfection; an oath being for the perfecting and finishing an affair in debate; agreeably, when covenants were made by oaths, seven witnesses were used, Gen. xxi. 28, 29, 30. and Herodotus says (q), as Cocceius (r) observes, that the Arabians, when they swore at making covenants, anointed the stones with blood.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Wherein God willing] Or *wherefore*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; that is, whereas an oath is used among men to confirm any thing that might be doubted; therefore God, in condescension to the weakness of men, made use of one; being very desirous and determined,

More abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel] By which is meant, not the Gospel nor the ordinances of it, though these are sometimes called the counsel of God; but the decree of God, concerning the salvation of his people by Jesus Christ, which is immutable; as appears from the unchangeableness of his nature, the sovereignty of his will, the unsearchableness of his wisdom, the omnipotence of his arm, and the unconditionality of the thing decreed, and from that and the purpose of it being in Christ: and the immutability of this, God was willing to shew more abundantly than in other purposes, though all God's purposes are unchangeable; or than had been shewn to the Old Testament saints; and more than was necessary, had it

(p) De Somniis, p. 567.

(p) Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 123.

(q) Thalio, l. 3. c. 8. (r) Lexic. Rab. 223 col. 848.

it not been for man's weakness: even to *the heirs of promise*; not any earthly temporal promise, but the promise of grace and glory, the promise of eternal life; the heirs of which are not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or God's elect among the Jews, but all that are Christ's; who are justified by his righteousness, believe in him, and are the children of God; for as many as are such are heirs of eternal glory, and of the promise of it: and that the unchangeableness of God's purpose in saving them by Christ might be manifest to them, and be out of all doubt, he

Confirmed it by an oath] His counsel and purpose; he not only determined in his mind that he would save them, and promised it in his covenant; but he also, to confirm it the more to the persons concerned in it, if possible, annexed his oath to it; or "he interposed or acted the part of a mediator by an oath;" which some refer to Christ's mediation between God and Abraham, when he swore unto him, as before observed: but rather it expresses the interposition of the oath between God's purpose and promise, and man's weakness: God did as it were bind himself by his oath, or lay himself under obligation, or become a surety, for the fulfilment of his purpose and promise; which shews the superabounding grace of God, the weakness of man, and what reason the heirs of promise have to believe.

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

That by two immutable things] God's counsel and oath, which never change or alter, and from which he never varies.

In which it was impossible for God to lie] Fail or deceive, nor indeed in any thing else, besides his counsels, promises, and oath, see *Titus* i. 2.

We might have a strong consolation] The saints often stand in need of consolation, by reason of sin, Satan, and the world; and it is the will of God that they should be comforted; and he would have them have *strong consolation*; that which is solid and abiding, and an abundance of it; and this much depends on the immutability of God's counsel and oath.

Who have fled for refuge] Either in allusion to mariners, as some think, who make all the haste they can to their port and haven, and are glad when they arrive there, and there cast anchor; of which mention is made in the next verse: or to runners in a race, who make up to the mark,

in order to lay hold on the prize; hence Christ is afterwards spoken of as a forerunner: or rather, to such as fled to the cities of refuge, which were a type of Christ; the names of these cities were, *Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan*; *Josh. xx. 7, 8.* and the situation of them according to the Jews ⁽¹⁾, was like two rows in a vineyard. Hebron, in Judah, was over-against Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem, in mount Ephraim, was over-against Ramoth in Gilead; Kedesh, in mount Naphtali, was over-against Golan in Bashan. The names of these several cities agree with Christ; Kedesh signifies *holy*, as Christ is, both as God and man, and is made sanctification to his people; Shechem is *the shoulder*, and Christ has not only bore the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, but he bears and carries their persons, and has the government of them on his shoulders, where they are safe and secure; Hebron may be interpreted *fellowship*, and the saints have not only fellowship with Christ, but with the Father through him; Bezer may be rendered *a fortified place*; Christ is a stronghold, a tower, a place of defence, whither the righteous run, and are safe; Ramoth signifies *exaltations*, and may fitly be applied to Christ, who is exalted at God's right hand, and who will exalt those that trust in him in due time: Golan may be translated *manifested*; Christ the Son of God has been manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and he will be revealed from heaven in a glorious manner at the last day. These cities of refuge were known to be such; and they were open to all Israelites and proselytes that killed any person at unawares; and they were open at all times; and the way to them was made plain and large: every year care was taken to make the way good, to remove every hillock, or any thing that hindered; if there was a river in the way, to make a bridge over it; and where more ways met, to set up pillars with a hand to them, and these words written on it, *לפני פנים* "refuge, refuge:" nor was the road to be less in breadth than thirty-two cubits ⁽²⁾; and there was always room in these cities; and whoever fled there was safe; but those that were found without, died. Thus Christ is known to be a refuge for distressed sinners; and he is open to all that come unto him, and at all times; the way of life and salvation by him is plainly pointed out in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; who are appointed to direct unto him, and to remove all impediments.

(1) T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2. (2) T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 31. 4. Bemilbar Rabba, §. 23. fol. 23a. 3. 4. Maimon. Hilchot. Rotzeach. c. 8. §. 5. Moles Kotenim-Mitavot Terah, pr. Affirm. 76. Bartenora in Mish. Maccot, c. 2. §. 5.

impediments and discouragements from such who are seeking to him: and though so many have been received and saved by him, still there is room for more; and whoever betake themselves to him are safe, but those that are without him die and perish: so Philo the Jew (*u*) makes the divine Word, or *Logos*, to be the chief and most profitable refuge to fly unto, of all the six which he takes notice of; and the Jews have a notion, that in the time to come, in the days of the Messiah, three other cities of refuge will be added (*w*). There is in some things a difference between Christ and these cities of refuge; there were six of these, but there is no other than Christ; the cities of refuge were only for such who shed blood ignorantly, but Christ is a refuge for all sorts of sinners; they were in a kind of exile who fled to them, but in Christ is compleat liberty; it was possible that such might die in them, but those that are in Christ never die the second death; and at best, those who fled thither were only saved from a temporal death, whereas those who betake themselves to Christ are saved with an everlasting salvation. Now *fleeing* to Christ, implies danger in the persons that flee, as such are in danger, in themselves, of the curse and condemnation of the law, of the wrath of God, and eternal death; it supposes a sense of this danger, which when right comes from the Spirit of God; it shews guilt of conscience, and a consciousness of the insufficiency of other refuges, and a knowledge of Christ, as a suitable one; and is expressive of haste and hearty desire to be there.

To lay hold on the hope set before us] By which is meant, not the grace of hope, but either heaven hoped for, or rather Christ the object of hope; who is not only set down at God's right hand, but is set forth in the Gospel and in the ordinances, both by the Spirit of God, and by the ministers of the word; that men may look and go to him, and trust and believe in him to the saving of their souls; where he is in sight, near at hand, accessible to; the way to him is straight forward; and here he abides: and he is set before us to be laid hold upon, which intends an act of faith; which grace lays hold on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is done in a view of fulness and safety in him, and under a sense of danger otherwise; it supposes grace, and that in exercise, and somewhat strong; and some degree of resolution and courage of faith, and the steadfastness and continuance of it; the soul determining, if it perishes it will perish here; and it shews that Christ and his grace are to be touched and laid hold upon by faith.

(*u*) De profugis, p. 464.

Maimon. et supra, §. 4.

(*w*) T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1.

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul] This world is as a sea; the church in it, and so every believer, is as a ship; the port that it is bound unto is heaven; Christ is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is cast on a bottom, out of sight; and when the ship is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the shore; but is of no service without a cable; and when cast aright, keeps the ship steady: so *hope* is cast on Christ; whence he is often called *hope* itself, because he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at present unseen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope, without the cable of faith, is of little service; but being cast aright on Christ, keeps the soul steady and immoveable: in some things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not of so much use in tempests as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor be useless, but so it cannot be with faith and hope; when the ship is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not so with the soul, when hope is in exercise; the anchor of hope is not cast on any thing below, but above; and here it is called the *anchor of the soul*, to distinguish it from any other, and to shew the peculiar benefit of it to the soul. Pythagoras makes use of the same metaphor (*x*); "Riches," he says, are a weak anchor; glory is yet weaker; the body likewise; principalities, honours, all these are weak and without strength. What then are strong anchors? "Prudence, magnanimity, fortitude; these no tempest shakes." But these philosophical moral virtues are not to be compared with the christian's grace of *hope*, which is

Both sure and steadfast] It is in itself a grace firm and stable; it is permanent, and can never be lost: and it is still more sure and steadfast, by virtue of what it is fixed upon, the person, blood and righteousness of Christ; and by the immutability, faithfulness, and power of God; it is concerned with; and through the aboundings and discoveries of divine love, grace, and mercy; and from the instances of grace to the vilest of sinners.

And which entereth into that within the veil] The holy of holies, heaven itself; in allusion to the veil, which divided between the holy and the holy of holies: the things *within the veil*, or in heaven, which hope entering into fixes upon, are the per-

son

(*x*) Apud Stobæum, Scim. I.

son of Christ, who is entered there, and appears in the presence of God for his people; his blood, which he has carried along with him, and by which he is entered there; his justifying righteousness by which the law is fulfilled, the two tables of stone in the ark of the testimony; the sweet incense of his mediation, which is continually offered up by him; the mercy-seat, or throne of grace, on which *Yehovah* sits as the God of grace; and all the glories of heaven; all which hope is concerned with, and receives strength and vigour from: and their being *within the veil*, is expressive of their hiddenness and invisibility at present, and of their safety and security, as well as of their sacredness; and this shews a difference between the hope of believers and others, whose hope fixes upon things short of these; and likewise the great privilege of a believer, who being made a priest unto God, has liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all. The Jews (*y*) speak of a *veil* in the world to come, which some are worthy to enter into.

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus] Christ was a runner; he had a race to run, which lay in going about to heal diseases, in preaching the gospel, in obeying the law, and in suffering death for his people; which race was run by him, with great swiftness, strength and courage, with patience, cheerfulness, and joy, and is now ended; as appears from the accomplishment of salvation, from his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; from the glorification of his human nature, and its everlasting freedom from the dominion of death: and this race is run out; as a *forerunner*, Christ is the most excellent runner; there is none like him; there is none that can come up to him; he has out-run and exceeded all others; he has performed in the best manner; he has run out his race first, and has entered into heaven first by his own blood; and he has cleared the way thither, and opened the gates of heaven for his people; and is a guide and pattern for them to follow: and he is the forerunner for them, as well as entered for them; for he was born, and he lived and died for them, for their good and service; and he is entered into heaven for them, as man and mediator, and as their high priest; where he represents their persons, appears and intercedes for them, takes care of their affairs, and presents their services; prepares mansions of glory for

them, and takes possession of heaven in their name, and opens the way for them to follow him thither; all which gives great encouragement to hope to enter now, where Jesus is: who is

Made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec] See chapter v. 6, 10. This is repeated here, to lead on to what the Apostle had to say concerning Melchisedec in the following chapter.

CHAP. VII.

The apostle having made mention of Melchisedec in the latter part of the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give some account of him, and of the excellency of his priesthood, and to shew, that Christ is a priest of his order, and is superior to Aaron and his sons. He first declares what Melchisedec was, that he was both king and priest; he names the place he was king of, and tells whose priest he was, even the priest of the most high God; and goes on to observe what he did, that he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, that he blessed him, and took tithes of him, *ſ. 1, 2.* and then interprets his name, and royal title, the one signifying *King of Righteousness*, the other *King of Peace*: that for any thing that can be learned from the scriptures, it is not known who was his father or his mother; what his lineage and descent; when he was born, or when he died; and that he is like to the Son of God, and continues a priest, *ſ. 2, 3.* upon which the apostle calls upon the Hebrews to consider the greatness of his person; and as it appears from that single instance of his receiving tithes from the patriarch Abraham, *ſ. 4.* by which it is evident, that he is greater than the Levites; and which is demonstrated in the following particulars. The Levites received tithes of their brethren that came out of Abraham's loins, as they did; but Melchisedec, whose descent was not from them, received tithes from Abraham himself, and besides blessed him; and it is a clear case, that the lesser is blessed of the greater, *ſ. 5—7.* the Levites were mortal men that received tithes, but a testimony is bore to Melchisedec, that he lives, *ſ. 8.* yea, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchisedec, since he was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedec met him, and took tithes of him; and therefore must be greater than Levi, *ſ. 9, 10.* And next the apostle proves the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood from this consideration, that there is another priest risen up, not of the order of Aaron, but of the order of Melchisedec, of which there would have

been no need, if the Levitical priesthood had been perfect; nor would it have been changed, as it is, and which has also made a change of the Law, by which it is established, necessary, *ψ*. 11, 12. that the priest that is risen up is not of the order of Aaron, is clear, because he is of another tribe, even of the tribe of Judah, to which the priesthood did not belong, *ψ*. 13, 14. and that he is of the order of Melchisedec; and so not according to the ceremonial law, but after the power of an endless life, is manifest from the testimony of the sacred scripture, *ψ*. 15—17. which lies in *Psalms* cx. 4. and that the ceremonial law, on which the Levitical priesthood stood, is changed and abrogated, is strongly asserted, and the reasons of it given, because it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect; and this was disannulled by Christ, the better hope brought in, who has made something perfect, and through whom we have access to God, *ψ*. 18, 19. Moreover, the superior excellency of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical one, is shewn in several particulars; the priests of Aaron's order were made without an oath; Christ was made with one, as is evident from the above-cited testimony, *ψ*. 20—22. they were many, he but one; they were mortal, and did not continue, he continues ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, *ψ*. 23, 24. wherefore, as they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death, their priesthood was ineffectual; they could not take away sin, and save sinners; but Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that draw nigh to God by him, as a priest, and that because he ever lives to compleat his office by intercession, *ψ*. 25. wherefore such an high priest as he is, must become men, and be suitable to them, especially since he is pure and holy, and in such an exalted state, *ψ*. 26. and this is another difference between him and the priests under the law; they were men that had infirmity, and were guilty of sins themselves, and so had need to offer for their own sins, and then for the sins of others; but Christ, the Son of God, who was consecrated a priest for evermore by the word of the oath, had no sin of his own to offer sacrifice for, only the sins of his people, which he did once, when he offered himself, *ψ*. 27, 28.

FOR this Melchisedec king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him:

[For this Melchisedec king of Salem] Various have

been the opinions of writers concerning Melchisedec; some have thought him to be more than a man; some, that he was an angel; others, that he was the holy Ghost; and others, that he was a divine person superior to Christ; which needs no refutation; others have supposed that he was the Son of God himself: but he is expressly said to be like unto him, and Christ is said to be of his order; which manifestly distinguish the one from the other; besides, there is nothing said of Melchisedec which proves him to be more than a man: accordingly others take him to have been a mere man; but these are divided; some say, that he was Shem, the son of Noah, which is the constant opinion of the Jewish writers (*z*); but it is not true of him, that he was without father and without mother, an account of his descent being given in scripture; nor is it probable that he should be a king of a single city in Ham's country, and Abraham be a stranger there; others say, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham: others affirm him to be a perfect sinless man, and that all that is said of him in Genesis, and in this context, is literally true of him; but that he should be immediately created by God, as Adam, and be without sin as he, are things entirely without any foundation: others take him to be a mere man, but an extraordinary one, eminently raised up by God to be a type of the Messiah; and think it most proper not to inquire curiously who he was, since the scripture is silent concerning his genealogy and descent; and that, as it should seem on purpose, that he might be a more full and fit type of Christ; and this sense appears best and safest. Aben Ezra says, his name signifies what he was, "the king of a righteous place:" Salem, of which he was king, was not Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, *Gen.* xxxiii. 18. afterwards called Salim, near to which John was baptizing, *John* iii. 23. where is shewn the palace of Melchisedec in its ruins, which cannot be, since that city was laid to the ground and sowed with salt by Abimelech, *Judges* ix. 45. but Jerusalem is the place; which is the constant opinion of the Jews (*a*), and is called Salem in *Psalms* lxxvi. 2. The interpretation of this word is given in the next verse; some of the Jewish writers referred to say, that it was usual for the kings of Jerusalem to be called *Melchisedec*

(*z*) Targum in Jon. & Jerus. Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, Levi ben Gerson & Abendana in *Gen.* xiv. 18. Bemidbar Rabba, *ψ*. 4. fol. 13a. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 8. Joehasin, fol. 135. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 16. 2. Shalhelet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. Perisfol. Itinera Mundi, p. 17. (*a*) Targ. Onk. Jon. & Jerus. Levi ben Gerson, Aben Ezra & ben Melec in *Gen.* xiv. 18. Tofaphot T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

chisedec and *Adoni-zedek*, as in *Joshua* x. 3. just as the kings of Egypt were called *Pharaoh*. This king was also

Priest of the most high God] As he is said to be, *Gen.* xiv. 18. for he was both king and priest, in which he was an eminent type of Christ; and his being a king is no objection to his being a priest, since it was usual for kings to be priests; and though the Hebrew word *Cohen*, sometimes signifies a prince, it cannot be so understood here, not only because the word is rendered *priest* by the Septuagint, and by the apostle, but because he is called the priest of God; and Christ is said to be of his order: and he is stiled the priest of God, because he was called and invested by him with this office, and was employed in his service; who is said to be the most high God, from his dwelling on high, and from his superior power to all others, and to distinguish him from idol gods. This is a character of great honour given to Melchisedec.

Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings] The four kings, whose names are mentioned in *Genesis* xiv. 1. whom Abraham slew, and over whom he got an entire victory, with only three hundred and eighteen men of his own house, after they had conquered the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela: which shews that war is lawful; that enemies may be slain in war; that kings may fall as well as other men; and that those who have conquered others, may be conquered themselves: and as he was returning with his spoils, Melchisedec met him; not alone, which is not to be supposed of so great a person; nor empty, for he brought with him bread and wine, not for sacrifice, as the papists would have it; but as Jarchi, a Jewish interpreter on the place, observes, they used to do so to such as were fatigued in war; for this is to be considered as a neighbourly action, done in point of interest and gratitude, and was a truly christian one, and very laudable and commendable; and doubtless had something in it typical of Christ, who gives to hungry and weary faints the bread of life, and refreshes them with the wine of divine love and grace.

And blessed him] Abraham, and the most high God also: the form of blessing both is recorded in *Genesis* xiv. 19, 20. This is not a mere civil salutation, nor only a congratulation upon his success, nor only a return of thanks for victory, though these things are included; nor did he do this as a private person, but as the priest of the most high God, and blessed him in his name authoritatively, as the high priest among the Jews afterwards did, *Numb.* vi. 23—27. and in this he

was a type of Christ, who blesses his people with all spiritual blessings, with redemption, justification, pardon, peace, and all grace, and with eternal glory.

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all] Or *tithes*, as in *Genesis* xiv. 20. Philo the Jew (b) renders the Hebrew phrase *מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם* just as the apostle does, *δευτερον αὐτο μακιστον*, “a tenth part of all, or out of all;” not of all that he brought back, as Lot’s goods, or the king of Sodom’s or any others; only of the spoils of the enemy, as in *y.* 4. which is no proof of any obligation on men to pay tithes now to an order of men; for this was a volutary act, and not what any law obliged to; it was done but once, and not constantly, or every year; it was out of the spoils of the enemy, and not out of his own substance, or of the increase of the earth; nor was it for the maintenance of Melchisedec, as a priest, who also was a king, and was richly provided for; but to testify his gratitude to God for the victory obtained, and his reverence of, and subjection to, the priest of God.

First being by interpretation King of righteousness] Or “a righteous king,” as Melchisedec was; not the king of a righteous place, as Aben Ezra thought, a place wherein dwelt righteousness, or righteous persons; but it was his proper name, which so signifies, and in which he was a type of Christ; who is righteous, not only as God, and as man, and as mediator, but particularly in the administration of his kingly office: his kingdom lies in righteousness, as well as peace; the subjects of it are righteous persons, and all his ways are just and true; his Gospel, by which he rules, is a declaration of righteousness, and he himself is the author of righteousness, to all his people.

And after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace] And may respect his peaceable government; and is very applicable to Christ, the prince of peace; whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his sceptre is a sceptre of peace; his royal proclamation is the Gospel of peace; and his subjects are the sons of peace; and he himself is the author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and his people; and he is the donor of peace, external, internal, and eternal. So Philo the Jew (c) interprets this name, *King of peace*, just as the apostle does.

3 Without

(b) De Congressu, p. 438.

(c) Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 75.

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Without father, without mother, without descent] Which is to be understood, not of his person, but of his priesthood; that his father was not a priest, nor did his mother descend from any in that office; nor had he either a predecessor or a successor in it, as appears from any authentic accounts: or this is to be interpreted, not of his natural, but scriptural being; for no doubt, as he was a mere man, he had a father and a mother, and a natural lineage and descent; but of these no mention is made in scripture, and therefore said to be *without* them; and so the Syriac version renders it, "whose father and mother are not written in the genealogies;" or there is no genealogical account of them. The Arabic writers tell us who his father and his mother were; some of them say that Peleg was his father: so Elmacinus (*d*), his words are these; Peleg lived after he begat Rehu two hundred and nine years; afterwards he begat Melchisedec, the priest, whom we have now made mention of. Patricides (*e*), another of their writers, expresses himself after this manner. "They who say Melchisedec had neither beginning of days, nor end of life, and argue from the words of the apostle Paul, asserting the same, do not rightly understand the saying of the apostle Paul; for Shem, the son of Noah, after he had taken Melchisedec, and withdrew him from his parents, did not set down in writing how old he was, when he went into the east, nor what was his age when he died; but Melchisedec was the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah; and yet none of those patriarchs is called his father. This only the apostle Paul means, that none of his family served in the temple, nor were children and tribes assigned to him. Matthew and Luke, the evangelists, only relate the heads of tribes: hence the apostle Paul does not write the name of his father, nor the name of his mother." And with these writers Sahid Aben Batric (*f*) agrees, who expressly affirms that Melchisedec was, אבן פלג "the son of Peleg;" though others of them make him to be the son of Peleg's son, whose name was Heraclim. The Arabic Catena (*g*) on

Genesis x. 25. "the name of one was Peleg," has this note in the margin; "and this (Peleg) was the father of Heraclim, the father of Melchisedec;" and in a preceding chapter, his pedigree is more particularly set forth: "Melchisedec was the son of Heraclim, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber; and his mother's name was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah; and Heraclim, the son of Eber married his wife Salathiel, and she was with child, and brought forth a son, and called his name Melchisedec, called also king of Salem: after this the genealogy is set down at length. Melchisedec son of Heraclim, which was the son of Peleg, which was the son of Eber, which was the son of Arphaxad, &c. till you come to, which was the son of Adam, on whom be peace." It is very probable Epiphanius has regard to this tradition, when he observes (*b*), that some say that the father of Melchisedec was called Eracla, and his mother Astarothe, the same with Afteria. Some Greek (*i*) writers say, he was of the lineage of Sidus, the son of Aegyptus, a king of Lybia, from whence the Egyptians are called: this Sidus, they say, came out of Egypt into the country of the Canaanitish nations, now called Palestine, and subdued it, and dwelled in it, and built a city, which he called Sidon, after his own name: but all this is on purpose concealed, that he might be a more apparent type of Christ, who, as man, is *without father*; for though, as God, he has a Father, and was never without one, being begotten by him, and was always with him, and in him; by whom he was sent, from whom he came, and whither he is gone; to whom he is the way, and with whom he is an advocate: yet, as man, he had no father; Joseph was his reputed father only; nor was the holy Ghost his father; nor is he ever said to be begotten as man, but was born of a virgin. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say, that the Redeemer, whom God will raise up, shall be *without father* (*k*). And he is *without mother*, though not in a spiritual sense, every believer being so to him as such; nor in a natural sense, as man, for the virgin Mary was his mother; but in a divine sense, as God: and he is *without descent*, or genealogy; not as man, for there is a genealogical account of him as such, in Matt. i. and Luke iii. and his pedigree and kindred were well known to the Jews; but as God: and this distinguishes him from the gods of the

(*d*) In Höttinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 8. p. 269. 254.

(*e*) In Ibid. p. 305, 306, 254.

(*f*) In Mr Gregory's preface to his works.

(*g*) In Ibid.

(*b*) Contra Hæres. Hæres. 55.

(*i*) Suidas in voce Melchisedec, Malala, l. 3. Glycas, Cedrenus & alii.

(*k*) R. Moses Hadarshan apud Galatin, l. 3. c. 27. & l. 2. c. 2.

the heathens, who were genealogized by them, as may be seen in Hesiod, Apollodorus, Hyginus, and other writers; and this condemns the blasphemous genealogies of the Gnostics and Valentinians. It follows,

Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life] That is, there is no account which shews when he was born, or when he died; and in this he was a type of Christ; who has no beginning of days, was from the beginning, and in the beginning, and is the beginning, and was from everlasting; as appears from his nature as God, from his names, from his office as mediator, and from his concern in the council and covenant of peace, and in the election of his people; and he has no end of life, both as God and man; he is the living God; and though as man he died once, he will die no more, but lives for ever. It is further said of Melchisedec,

But made like unto the Son of God] In the above things; from whence it appears, that he is not the Son of God; and that Christ, as the Son of God, existed before him, and therefore could not take this character from his incarnation or resurrection.

Abideth a priest continually] Not in person, but in his antitype Christ Jesus; for there never will be any change of Christ's priesthood; nor will it ever be transferred to another; the virtue and efficacy of it will continue for ever; and he will ever live to make intercession; and will always bear the glory of his being both priest and king upon his throne: the Syriac version renders it, "his priesthood abides for ever;" which is true both of Melchisedec and of Christ.

4 Now consider how great this man was unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Now consider how great this man was] Melchisedec, of whom so many great and wonderful things are said in the preceding verses: and as follows,

Unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils] Of Abraham's giving tithes to him, see the note on *Gen. 14. 20.* and Melchisedec's greatness is aggravated, not only from this act of Abraham's, but from Abraham's being a patriarch, who did it; he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the sons of Jacob are called, *Acts 3. 13.* he is the patriarch of the whole Jewish nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, the friend of God, and heir of the world; how great then must Melchisedec be, to whom he paid tithes?

and how much greater must Christ, the antitype of Melchisedec be?

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

And verily they that are of the sons of Levi] Or Levites; who are of the tribe of Levi, whose descent is from him.

Who receive the office of the priesthood] As some of them were priests, though not all; and the Levites therefore are sometimes called priests. R. Joshua ben Levi says, that in twenty-four places the priests are called *Levites*; and this is one of them, *Ezek. 44. 15.* and the priests and Levites (*k*), &c. these

Have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law] The ceremonial law, *Numb. xviii. 20—26.* these they took of all the people of Israel, in the rest of the tribes, by the commandment of God, on account of their service in the tabernacle; and because they had no inheritance in the land; and to shew that the Israelites held their land of God himself.

That is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham] Who are their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, though of different tribes; and from these they receive, notwithstanding they are the sons of Abraham: but here a difficulty arises, how the Levites that were priests can be said to receive tithes from the people, when they received the tenth part of the tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the Levites, *Numb. xviii. 26.* *Neb. x. 38.* but it should be observed, that it was not necessary that the Levites should give these tithes to the priests themselves; an Israelite might do it, and so give the Levites the less; on which account the priests may be said to receive from the people; besides, Ezra in his time ordered, that the first tithe should not be given to the Levites, but to the priests, because they would not go up with him to Jerusalem (*1*).

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

But he whose descent is not counted from them] That is, Melchisedec, whose genealogy or pedigree

(1) T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 36. 2. & Berozor, fol. 4. 1.

(2) Maimon, Hilchot Maaser, c. 1. §. 4.

gree is not reckoned from the Levites, nor from any from whom they descend; his lineal descent is not the same with theirs; and so did not receive tithes by any law, as they did, but by virtue of his superiority.

Received tithes of Abraham] Not from the people, or his brethren, but from Abraham, the father of the people of Israel, and of Levi himself.

And blessed him that had the promises] Of a son, and of the Messiah that should spring from him, in whom all nations should be blessed; and of the land of Canaan, and of the blessings of grace and glory. This shows that Melchisedec had a descent, though it was not known; and that, since his descent was not the same with the Levites, he was a more proper type of Christ, who belonged not to that, but another tribe.

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

This is a self-evident truth, and is undeniable; it admits of no controversy, and cannot be gain-sayed, that he that blesteth, is greater in that respect than he that is blessed by him; as the priests were greater in their office than the people who were blessed by them; and so Melchisedec, as a priest of the most high God, and as blessing Abraham, was greater than he; and so must be greater than the Levites, who sprung from him; and his priesthood be more excellent than theirs; and consequently Christ, his antitype, and who was of his order, must be greater too; which is the design of the apostle throughout the whole of his reasoning.

8 And here men that die, receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

And here men that die receive tithes] The priests and Levites were not only men, and mortal men, subject to death, but they did die, and so did not continue, by reason of death, *ψ. 24.*

But there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth] Which is to be understood of Melchisedec; who is not opposed to men, as if he was not a man, nor to mortal men, but to men that die; nor is he said to be immortal, but to live: and this may respect the silence of the scripture concerning him, which gives no account of his death; and may be interpreted of the perpetuity of his priesthood, and of his living in his antitype Christ; and the testimony concerning him, is in *Psalms cx. 4.*

9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

And as I may so say] With truth, and with great propriety and pertinence.

Levi also, who receiveth tithes] Or the Levites, who receive tithes according to the law of Moses from the people of Israel.

Paid tithes in Abraham] That is, to Melchisedec; and therefore Melchisedec must be greater than they, and his priesthood a more excellent one than theirs; since they who receive tithes from others gave tithes to him.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

For he was yet in the loins of his father] Abraham; namely, Levi and his whole posterity; which is to be understood feminally, just as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, when he sinned and fell, and so they sinned and fell in him; and so Levi was in Abraham's loins,

When Melchisedec met him] Which, as it proves Melchisedec to be greater than Levi, and much more Jesus Christ: who is a priest of his order, which is the grand thing the apostle has in view; so it serves to illustrate several points of doctrine, in which either of the public heads, Adam and Christ, are concerned, with respect to their seed and offspring; such as personal election in Christ, an eternal donation of all blessings of grace to the elect in him, eternal justification in him, the doctrine of original sin, and the saints crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and session in Christ, and together with him.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood] The priesthood which was established in the tribe of Levi; so called, to distinguish it from that which was before this institution, from the times of Adam, as well as from the priesthood of Melchisedec, and from the priesthood of Christ, and from that of his people under the Gospel, who are all priests; as well as to restrain it to the subject of the apostle's discourse: the design of which is to shew, that there is no perfection by it; as is clear from the priests themselves, who were but men, mortal men, sinful men, and so imperfect, and consequently their priesthood; and from

from their offerings, between which, and sin, there is no proportion; and at best were but typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and could neither make the priests nor the worshippers perfect, neither in their own consciences, nor in the sight of God: moral actions are preferred before them, and yet by these there is no perfection, justification, and salvation; to which may be added, that the sacrifices the priests offered did not extend to all kind of sins, only to sins of ignorance, not to presumptuous ones; and there were many under that dispensation punished with death; and at most they only delivered from temporal, not eternal punishment, and only entitled to a temporal life, not an eternal one.

(For under it the people received the law)] Not the moral law, which was given to Adam in innocence, and as it came by Moses, it was before the Levitical priesthood took place; but the ceremonial law, and which was carnal, mutable, and made nothing perfect: the Syriac version renders it, "by which a law was imposed upon the people;" to regard the office of priesthood, and the priests in it, and bring their sacrifices to them; and the Arabic version reads, "the law of the priest's office;" which office was after the law of a carnal commandment, and so imperfect, as is manifest from what follows: for had perfection been by it,

What further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? That there was another priest promised and expected, and that he should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and who was to make his soul an offering for sin, is certain, *Exra* ii. 63. *Psal* cx. 4. *Isa* liii. 10. and such an one has risen, even Jesus of Nazareth; and yet there would have been no need of him, and especially, that he should be of a different order from Aaron's had there been perfection by the Levitical priesthood.

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

For the priesthood being changed] Not translated from one tribe, family, or order, to another, but utterly abolished; for though it is called an everlasting priesthood, yet that is to be understood with a limitation, as the word *everlasting* often is, as relating to things under that dispensation; for nothing is more certain than that it is done away: it was of right abrogated at the death of Christ, and it is now in fact; since the destruction of Jerusalem, the daily sacrifice has ceased, and the children of Israel have been many days without

one, and without an ephod. And the Jews themselves own, that the high priesthood was to cease in time to come (*m*), and which they say Azariel the son of Oded prophesied of in *2 Chron.* xv. 3.

There is made of necessity a change also of the law] Not the moral law, that was in being before the priesthood of Aaron, nor do they stand and fall together; besides, this still remains, for it is perfect, and cannot be made void by any other; nor is it set aside by Christ's priesthood: though there is a sense in which it is abolished; as it is in the hands of Moses; as it is a covenant of works; as to justification by it; and as to its curse and condemnation to them that are Christ's; yet it still remains in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and is useful, and continues so on many accounts: but either the judicial law; not that part of it which is founded on justice and equity, and was a means of guarding the moral law, for that still subsists; but that which was given to the Jews as Jews, and some parts of which depended on the priesthood, and so ceased with it; as the laws concerning the cities of refuge, raising up seed to a deceased brother, preserving inheritances in families, and judging and determining controversies: or rather, the ceremonial law, which was but a shadow of good things to come, and was given but for a time; and this concerned the priesthood, and was made void by the priesthood of Christ; for that putting an end to the Levitical priesthood, the law which related to it must unavoidably cease, and become of no effect. This the Jews most strongly deny; God, they (*n*) say, will not change nor alter the law of Moses for ever. The ninth article of their creed, as drawn up by Maimonides, runs thus (*o*); "I believe with a perfect faith that this law *למשה נתנה* shall not be changed," nor shall there be another law from the creator, blessed be his name." But the reasoning of the apostle is strong and unanswerable.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

For he of whom these things are spoken] In *Psal* cx. 4. and in the type of him Melchisedec, in the preceding verses; for not Melchisedec is here meant, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by what follows; the antitype of Melchisedec, the Lord our righteousness, the Prince of peace, the Priest

(*m*) *Vajikra* Rabba, §. 19; fol. 160. 4. (*n*) *Seder Tephillot*, Ed. Amsterd. fol. 2. 1. (*o*) *Apud Seder Tephillot*, Ed. Basil. fol. 86. 2.

Priest of God, that lives for ever, without father, without mother, &c.

Pertaineth to another tribe] The tribe of Judah, and not the tribe of Levi.

Of which no man gave attendance at the altar] Either of burnt-offering or of incense; that is, no man waited there, or took upon him and exercised the priest's office that was of the tribe of Judah: no man might lawfully do it; Uzziah indeed thrust himself into the priest's office, who was of that tribe, and went into the temple and burnt incense upon the altar of incense; but then he had no right to do it, and was punished for it.

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda] Out of the tribe of Juda; it is certain that the Messiah was to spring from that tribe, *Genesis* xlix. 10. *1 Chron.* v. 2. he was to be of the family of Jesse, and of the house of David; and hence he is sometimes called David himself; and so the Jews expect that he will come from the tribe of Juda, and not from any other (p); and it is evident that Jesus, who is our Lord by creation, redemption, and the conquest of his grace, sprung from this tribe: this is clear from the place of his birth, Bethlehem of Juda; and from his reputed father Joseph, and real mother Mary, being both of the house of David; and this was known to the Jews, and it is owned by them that he was near to the kingdom (q), which he could not be, if he was not of that tribe; and hence he is called the lion of the tribe of Juda.

Of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood] He said many things of it in *Deut.* xxxiii. 8. and relates many things concerning it as spoken by Jacob, but nothing about the priesthood, as if it belonged to that, or that any that should spring from it, should exercise that office. The Alexandrian copy, the Claromontane manuscript, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "concerning the priests;" whence it follows that there is a change of the priesthood, and that the Messiah, as he was not to be, so he is not a priest of Aaron's order, not being of the same tribe.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

And it is yet far more evident] From a fact which cannot be denied.

For that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest] Or another has risen, even Jesus the son of David, of the tribe of Juda; another from Aaron, one that is not of his family or tribe, but one like to Melchisedec: hence we learn that Melchisedec and Christ are not the same person; and that the order and similitude of Melchisedec are the same; and that Christ's being of his order, only imports that there is a resemblance and likeness between him and Melchisedec, in many things, which are observed in the beginning of this chapter: and this *arising* does not intend Christ's setting up himself, only his appearance in this form; and being expressed in the present tense, denotes the continual being, and virtue of his priesthood.

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Who was made] Not as man, much less as God; but as a priest, constituted and appointed one.

Not after the law of a carnal commandment] Either the ceremonial law in general, which was a carnal one, if we consider the persons to whom it belonged, the Israelites according to the flesh; it was incumbent upon, and might be performed by such who were only carnal; and it was performed by and for men that were in the flesh, or mortal; and if we consider the matter of it, the subject on which various of its rites were exercised, was the flesh or body, and which were performed by manual operation; and the sacrifices of it were the flesh of beasts; and these were for the sins of the flesh, and for the removing the ceremonial uncleanness of it; and the virtue of them reached only to the purifying of the flesh; and the whole of it is distinct from the moral law, which is spiritual, and reaches to the spirit or soul of man; whereas this only was concerned about temporal and external things: or else the law of the priesthood is particularly intended; or that commandment which respected the priesthood of Aaron; which law regarded the carnal descent of his sons; enjoined a carnal inauguration of them, and provided for their succession and continuance in a carnal way; after which, Christ the great high priest did not become one.

But after the power of an endless life] This may be understood either of the Gospel, according to which Christ is a priest; and which is called *life*, in opposition to the law which is the ministration of death; and because it is the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; and points out Christ the way of life, and has brought

(p) Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 62. 2. (q) T. Bad. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 7.

brought life and immortality to light; and may be said to be endless, in distinction from the law, which is temporary; and because it is itself permanent and everlasting; contains in it the promise of eternal life, and is the means of bringing souls unto it: and there is a power goes along with it; which distinguishes it from the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, which is abolished, because of the weakness of it; for it is attended with the power of the Spirit of God, and is the power of God unto salvation: or else this intends the endless life which Christ has in and of himself; and which qualifies him for a priest; and stands opposed to the mortality of the priests, and to that law, which could not secure them from it: the priests died, and the law by which they were priests could not prevent their death. Christ is the living God, the prince of life, he had power to lay down his life as man, and power to take it up again; and his life, as man, is an endless one, which qualifies him for that part of his priestly office, his intercession and advocacy: or it may design that power, which his Father has given him as mediator, of an endless life, both for himself and for all his people; and regards chiefly his ever living as a priest, and the perpetuity of his priesthood, and the continual virtue and efficacy of it.

17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

For he testifieth] That is, either David, the penman of the psalm, or rather the holy Ghost the enditer of it, or God in the scripture, in Psalm cx. 4. of this form of citing scripture, see the note on chapter ii. 6.

Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec] See chap. v. 6, 10. and vi. 20.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment] Not the moral law; though what is here said of the commandment may be applied to that; that is sometimes called the commandment, Rom. vii. 12, 13. it went before the promise of the Messiah, and the Gospel of Christ, and the dispensation of it; it is in some respects weak; it cannot justify from the guilt of sin, nor free from the power of it, nor secure from death the punishment of it, nor give eternal life; though it has a power to command, accuse, convince, and condemn: and it is also unprofitable in the business of justification and salvation; though otherwise it is profitable to convince of sin, to shew what

VOL. V.

righteousness is, and to be a rule of conversation to the saints in the hand of Christ; yet not this, but the ceremonial law is meant, which is the commandment that respected the Levitical priesthood, and is called a carnal one, and is inclusive of many others, and which distinguishes that dispensation from the Gospel one: and this may be said to be

Going before] With respect to time, being before the Gospel-state, or the exhibition of the new covenant of grace; and with respect to use, as a type or shadow of good things to come; and as it was a schoolmaster going before, and leading on to the knowledge of evangelical truths: and this is now disannulled, abrogated, and made void; the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances is abolished.

For the weakness and unprofitableness thereof] The ceremonial law was weak; it could not expiate or atone for sin, in the sight of God; it could not remove the guilt of sin from the conscience, but there was still a remembrance of it; nor could it cleanse from the filth of sin; all it could do was, to expiate sin typically, and sanctify externally to the purifying of the flesh; and all the virtue it had was owing to Christ whom it prefigured; and therefore being fulfilled in him, it ceased: and it was unprofitable; not before the coming of Christ, for then it was a shadow, a type, a schoolmaster, and had its usefulness; but since his coming, who is the body and substance of it, it is unprofitable to be joined to him; and is of no service in the affair of salvation; and is no other than a grievous yoke of bondage; yea, is what renders Christ unprofitable and of no effect, when submitted to as in force, and as necessary to salvation; and because of these things, it is abolished and made null and void. The Jews, though they are strenuous asserters of the unalterableness of the law of Moses, yet sometimes are obliged to acknowledge the abrogation of the ceremonial law in the times of the Messiah; "The commandment, they (r), meaning this, shall cease in the time to come;" and again, "All sacrifices shall cease in the future state, or time to come, (that is, the times of the Messiah) but the sacrifice of praise (s)."

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

For the law made nothing perfect] Or no man; neither any of the priests that offered sacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered;

(r) T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 62. 2.

fol. 153. 1. & §. 27. fol. 168. 4.

(s) Vajikra Rabba, §. 9.

it could not perfectly make atonement for sin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither justify or sanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteousness, nor bring men to perfect holiness, and so to eternal life and salvation.

But the bringing in of a better hope did] Not the grace of hope; that is not something newly brought in, the saints under the Old Testament had it; nor is it *better* now than then, though it has greater advantages and more encouragement to the exercise of it: nor heaven and eternal glory, the thing hoped for; the saints under the legal dispensation hoped for this, as well as believers under the present dispensation; nor is what the latter hope for better than that the former did: nor is God, the author and object of hope, intended; the phrase of *bringing in* will not suit with him; besides, he is distinguished from it, in the next clause: to understand it of the Gospel, the means of *hope*, and of encouraging it, is no ill sense; that standing in direct contradistinction to the law: but the priesthood of Christ, of which the apostle is treating in the context, is generally understood, which is the ground of hope; for all promises respecting eternal life are confirmed by it, and all blessings connected with it procured; and it is better than the Aaronical priesthood under the law; and a better ground of hope than the sacrifices of that law were: Christ himself may be designed, who is often called *hope*, being the object, ground, and foundation of it; and is a better one than Moses, or his law, Aaron, or his priesthood; and it is by him men draw nigh to God; and the bringing in of him or his priesthood, shews that Christ's priesthood was not upon the foot of the law, and that he existed as a priest, before brought in, and as a better hope, though not so fully revealed; and it may have respect to his coming in the flesh, being sent, or brought in by his Father: now the bringing in of him and his priesthood, did make something perfect; it brought to perfection all the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament, the whole Law, moral and ceremonial; it brought in perfect atonement, reconciliation, pardon, righteousness, and redemption; it perfected the persons of all God's elect; and perfectly provided for their holiness, peace, comfort, and eternal happiness: some read the words, "*but it, the law, was the bringing in of a better hope;*" the law led unto, made way for, and introduced Christ, the better hope; and so the Arabic version, "*seeing it should be an entrance to a more noble hope;*" the Syriac version renders it, "*but in the room of it entered a hope more excellent than that:*" than the law.

By the which we draw nigh unto God] The Father, as the Father of Christ, and of his people in him, and as the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace; and this drawing nigh to him, is to be understood not locally but spiritually; it includes the whole worship of God; but chiefly designs prayer: and ought to be done with a true heart, in opposition to hypocrisy; and in faith, in opposition to doubting; and with reverence and humility, in opposition to rashness; and with freedom, boldness, and thankfulness: and it is through Christ and his priesthood, that souls have encouragement to draw nigh to God; for Christ has paid all their debts, satisfied law and justice, procured the pardon of their sins, atonement and reconciliation for them; he is the way of their access to God; he gives them audience and acceptance; he presents their prayers, and intercedes for them himself.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest* :

Our version supplies, *he was made priest*; which well agrees with what is said in the next verse; the Syriac version renders it, "and which he confirmed to us by an oath;" that is, the better hope, Christ and his priesthood, said to be brought in, and by which men draw nigh to God; this is established by the oath of God himself, referring to *Psalms* cx. 4. afterwards cited in proof of it.

21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec :)

(For these priests were made without an oath] The priests of the tribe of Levi, and of the order of Aaron, were installed into their office, and invested with it, without an oath; no mention is made of any when Aaron and his sons were put into it in Moses's time; nor was any used afterwards, neither by God, nor by the priests, nor by the people; it is true indeed that after the sect of the Sadduces arose, the high priest on the day of atonement was obliged to take an oath that he would not change any of the customs of the day (1): but then this regarded not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his, and not of the Lord's, which is here designed.

But this with an oath] That is, Christ was made an high priest with an oath, even with an oath

(1) *Mish. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5.*

oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one: and this oath was made

By him that said unto him] The Syriac version adds, "as he said to him by David;" that is, in *Psalms* cx. 4. David being the penman of that psalm, in which stand the following words of the Father to Christ.

The Lord swear, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec] Which proves that *Jehovah* swore that Christ should be a priest, and continue so: swearing, when ascribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himself, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the mission of his Son to be the Redeemer, or as here, his priestly office: and this oath was made not so much on Christ's account, as on account of the heirs of promise, for their consolation; and shews the dignity, validity, importance, and singularity of Christ's priesthood, as well as the durableness of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holiness and righteousness, and to his happiness, to his unchangeableness, omniscience, and omnipotence; it is indeed sometimes ascribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and the change that is made is in the creature, and not in God himself: but God will not repent in any sense of the priesthood of Christ, nor of his oath, that it should continue for ever according to the Melchisedecian order; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it.

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Or *covenant*, for the word signifies both; and what is intended may be called both a *testament* and a *covenant*; a testament, because it is founded in the good will and pleasure of God, and respects an inheritance bequeathed by God the Father to his children, which was confirmed, and comes to them by the death of Christ, the testator; and a covenant, it being a compact or agreement made by the Father with Christ, as the representative of all the elect; in which promises and blessings of all sorts are provided and secured for them in him; and is called in scripture a covenant of life and peace, because these are things concerned in it; and is commonly by men called the covenant of grace, because it springs from the grace of God; the subject-matter of it is grace, and the

end of it is the glory of God's grace: now this is better than the covenant of works, broken by man, and which exposes him to the curse and condemnation of the law; or than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, by which was no perfection; and the form of administration of it, under the Gospel-dispensation, is better than that under the law; for it is now revealed more clearly, and administered without types, shadows, and sacrifices; and the extent of its administration is larger, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and besides, it is now actually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called the blood of the everlasting covenant: and of this testament or covenant Christ is the *surety*; the word signifies, "one that draws nigh." Christ drew nigh to his Father in the council of peace, and undertook to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; he substituted himself in their place and stead; he interposed between the creditor and the debtor, and became surety for the payment of the debts of the latter, and so stood engaged for them, and in their room: Christ is not the surety for the Father to his people, but for them to the Father; as to satisfy for their sins, to work out a righteousness for them, to preserve and keep them, and make them happy; which is an instance of matchless love.

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

And they truly were many priests] There were many common priests at a time; and though there was but one high priest at a time, yet there were many of them in a line of succession from Aaron down to the apostle's time. The Jews say (a), that under the first temple eighteen high priests ministered, and under the second temple more than three hundred: this shews the imperfection of this priesthood, since it was in many hands; no one continuing and being sufficient to execute it; but Christ is the one and only high Priest; there is no other, nor is there any need of any other: the reason why there were so many under the law was,

Because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death] Death has a power to forbid a long continuance in this world, and no man does continue long here; death puts a stop to men's works, and to the exercise of their several callings; no office, even the most sacred, exempts from it; no not the office of high priests: these were but men,

(a) T. Bad. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. Pike Tosephot Zebachim, Art. 72.

sinful men, and so died; and their discontinuance by reason of death, shews the imperfection of their priesthood: there was another reason besides this which the apostle gives, why the high priests were so many, and especially about this time; and that is, the office was bought for money, and men that would give most were put into it: hence there were frequent changes; the Jews themselves say, they changed every twelve months (w).

24. But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

But this man, because he continueth ever] Though he died, death did not forbid him to continue, as it does other men; he was not forced to die, he died voluntarily; and he continued but for a small time under the power of death; besides, his death was a branch of his priestly office; so that he not only continued in his divine nature, which still had the human nature in union with it, but he continued in his office as a priest, and quickly rose from the dead; and the virtue of his sacrifice always remains, and he himself ever lives as an intercessor: wherefore he

Hath an unchangeable priesthood] Which will never be antiquated, and give place to another; nor does it, or ever will it pass from him to another; for it is needless, seeing he lives, and no other is sufficient for it; and it would be injustice to pass it to another; the glory of it is due to him: and this is matter of comfort to the saints, that he sits a priest upon his throne, and that his priesthood always continues.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost] Because he continues ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood. This is to be understood not of temporal salvation, nor of providential favours, but of spiritual and eternal salvation; and includes a deliverance from all evil here and hereafter, and an enjoyment of all good in this world and in that to come: Christ was called to this work by his Father; he was promised by him to do it, and was sent by him to effect it, and has accomplished it; and this is the reason of his name, Jesus, and was the end of his coming into this world, and which the Gospel always represents as such: this work required ability; here was a law to be fulfilled; justice to be satisfied; sin to be bore, removed, and atoned for;

many enemies to engage with, and a cursed death to undergo: it was a work no creature, angels or men, were able to undertake and perform; the priests under the law could not; men cannot save themselves, nor can any creature work out salvation for them: but Christ is able; as appears from the help his Father laid on him, who knew him to be mighty; from his own undertaking it, being mighty to save; and from his having completely effected it; and he must needs be able to do it, since he is the mighty God: and he is able to save to the uttermost; "to the utmost perfection," as the Arabic version renders it; so as nothing can be wanting in the salvation he is the author of, nor any thing be added to it; or "for ever," as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; to the utmost of time, even to eternity, as well as to the utmost of mens wants: the persons he is able to save are such

That come unto God by him] Christ is able to save all the world, were it his will; but not his absolute power is designed by his ability, but that power which by his will is put into act; and reaches not to all men, for all are not saved; and those that are, are described by special characters, as here: they are such whom come to God, not essentially considered, but personally, or in the person of the Father; and not as an absolute God, but as in Christ; not as on a throne of justice, but as on a throne of grace and mercy; not only as Christ's Father, but as theirs; and not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace: and this act of coming to him is a fruit of his everlasting love; an effect of Christ's death; is peculiar to regenerate persons; takes in the whole service of God, especially prayer; is not local but spiritual, it is by faith; and supposes spiritual life, and implies a sense of need, and of God's ability and willingness to help: the medium or mean by which such come to God, is Christ. Man had access to God in his state of innocence, but sinning, was not admitted; there is no approaching now unto him without a middle person; Christ is the Mediator, who having made peace, atoned for sin, satisfied justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, introduces his people into God's presence; in whom their persons and services are accepted, and through whom all blessings are communicated to them.

Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them] Christ ever lives as God; he is the living God; and though he died as man, he is risen from the dead, and will not die again, but live for evermore; and he lives as Mediator and Redeemer, and particularly as a priest; one branch of whose

(w) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

office it is to intercede for his people: this he does now in heaven: not by vocal prayer and supplication, at least not as in the days of his flesh; or as if he was supplicating an angry judge; nor as controverting or litigating a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for them; by the presentation of his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; by declaring his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed on such and such persons; and by recommending the prayers of his people, and removing the charges and accusations of Satan: the things he intercedes for are, the conversion of his that are in a state of nature; the consolation of distressed ones; fresh discoveries of pardoning grace to fallen believers; renewed strength to oppose sin, exercise grace, discharge duty, and bear up under temptations, and deliverance out of them; perseverance in faith and holiness, and eternal glorification; and he intercedes for these things; not for all the world, but for all the elect, even though transgressors; and he is very fit for this work, as the following verse shews; he is the one and only Mediator; and he is a very prevalent Intercessor, he always succeeds; and he does this work readily, willingly, cheerfully, and freely; and all this proves him to be able to save; for though the impetration of salvation is by his death, the application of it is owing to his interceding life; had he died and not lived again, he could not have saved to the uttermost; his life is the security of his people, and he lives for them, and as their representative; the blessed effects of which they constantly enjoy.

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

For such an high priest became us] Is suitable to us, answers to our cases and necessities, is every way such an one as is wanted.

Who is holy] By nature, originally and undervatively, perfectly and compleatly, internally as well as externally; he was typified by the high priest, who had "holiness to the Lord" written on his forehead, and far exceeds any of the priests in holiness; and such an one becomes us, for had he not been holy he could not have entered into the holy place for us, or have appeared there on our account, or have been our sanctification; so Philo the Jew speaks of the true priest, as being not man, but the divine Word, and as free from all sin voluntary and involuntary (x).

Harmless] Without any viciousity in his nature, without guile in his mouth, or malice in his heart; doing no injury to any man's person or property: the character chiefly regards the innocence and holiness of his life and conversation; and in which he exceeded the priests under the law; and he is a suitable one for us, for hereby he was fit to be made sin, and to take it away.

Undefiled] With the sin of Adam, with which all mankind are defiled; with the blood of slain beasts, with which the priests under the law were sprinkled; with the filthy conversation of the wicked, which affects good men: hence he was more excellent than the priests under the law; and one that becomes us, since his blood is the blood of a lamb without spot and blemish: the high priests under the law, according to the Jews (y), were to excel their brethren in knowledge, beauty, and riches; but the distinguishing character of our high priest is purity and holiness.

Separate from sinners] Not but that he took the nature of sinners, though not a sinful nature; and he was often in the company of sinners when on earth, and was reckoned among them, and as one of them; but he was separated from them in Adam; he was not among the individuals of human nature that sinned in him; and he was brought into the world in a different manner from them, not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; and he had no communion with them in sin; nor did he encourage them to it in the days of his flesh; and now he is removed far from them: and herein he exceeds the priests under the law, and is suitable to us: the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "separate from sins;" the allusion seems to be, to the separating of the high priest from his own house to one of the courts of the temple seven days before the day of atonement (z), and so before the burning of the heifer (a):

And made bigger than the heavens] Than the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens, and than the angels in heaven; and so preferable to the high priests, and exceedingly agreeable to us, chapter iv. 14. the allusion may be to the carrying of the high priest on the day of atonement to an upper chamber in the temple, called the chamber of *Abtines* (b): this may be understood either of Christ's exaltation in heaven, where angels are subject to him, and his priesthood is compleated; or of his excelling the angels in the holiness of his nature, which agrees with the other characters in

(x) De Profugis, p. 446, 467. & de Victimis, p. 343.

(y) Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 3.

(z) Misn. Yoma, c. 2. §. 2.

(a) Misn. Parah, c. 3. §. 1.

(b) Misn. Yoma, c. 2. §. 5.

in the text, and stands opposed to the infirmities of the priests.

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests] They being sinners, and he not.

To offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples] As they did on the day of atonement; see Lev. xvi. 6, 11, 15, 16. upon which place the Jews (c) make the same remark the apostle does here; "He (the high priest, they say) offers sacrifices for the sins of the people, for his own, *בקרבתו* first, *ולבחר* and afterwards for the sins of the people:" which was one reason of the imperfection and insufficiency of their sacrifices; but Christ needed not to offer for his own, nor could he, for he had none of his own; what he had was by imputation; wherefore he only needed to offer, and he only did offer for the sins of the people; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, even of all God's covenant people; nor did he need to do this daily, as they did; they offered sacrifice daily, the common priests every day, morning and evening, and the high priest on a stated day once a year, on the day of atonement.

For this he did once, when he offered up himself] And in this also he differed from them; they offered not themselves, but what was inferior to themselves, and what could not take away sin, and therefore was repeated; but Christ offered himself, his whole human nature, soul and body, and both as in union with his divine nature; and this being offered to God freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby justice was satisfied; the law fulfilled; sin taken away, and compleat salvation obtained; so that there never was since any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which shews the perfection and fulness of his priesthood, and the preference of it to the Levitical one.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity] Every word has an emphasis on it, and shews the difference between Christ and these priests: they were many; they were made priests by the law, the law of a carnal commandment,

which made nothing perfect, and was disannulled; they were men that were made priests by it, and could not really draw nigh to God, and mediate with him for themselves, or others, nor atone either for their own or others sins; and they were men that had infirmity, not natural and corporal, for they were to have no bodily blemishes and deficiencies in them, but sinful ones; and especially such were they who bore this office under the second temple, and particularly in the times of Christ and his Apostles (d).

But the word of the oath, which was since the law] That word which had an oath annexed to it, which declared Christ an high priest after the order of Melchisedec, was since the law of the priesthood of Aaron; for though Christ was made a priest from eternity, yet the promise which declared it, and had an oath joined to it was afterwards in David's time, Psalm cx. 4. and this word of the oath

Maketh the Son] Not a son, but a priest; publisheth and declares him to be so: Christ, though a man, yet he is not a mere man; he is the Son of God, and as such opposed to men; and therefore is not the Son of God as man; and this shews that he was a son before he was a priest, and therefore is not so called on account of his office; and it is his being the Son of God which gives lustre and glory to his priestly office, and virtue and efficacy to his sacrifice and intercession, and gives him the preference to all other priests.

Who is consecrated for evermore] Or *perfected*, or *perfect*; he is perfect in his obedience and sufferings, in his sacrifice, and as he is now in heaven, in compleat glory; the law made men priests that did not continue, but Christ is a priest for evermore, and absolutely perfect.

CHAP. VIII.

The apostle observing that the priesthood of Christ is the sum of what he had treated of in the preceding chapter, proceeds to shew the superior excellency of it in other instances, particularly in the place where Christ now officiates, which is in heaven; he being set down at the right hand of God there, and so was a minister of the sanctuary, and true tabernacle pitched by God, and not man; whereas the priests of Aaron's line only ministered on earth, and in the typical sanctuary and tabernacle, *ψ. 1, 2.* and after he had observed that Christ must have something to offer, meaning his body, to answer to the gifts and sacrifices the priests were ordained to offer, *ψ. 3.* he proves the necessity

(c) Zohar in Lev. fol. 26, 4.

(d) Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8, 2. & 9, 1.

sity of his ministering in heaven, because if he was on earth he would not be a priest, a compleat one, and would have been useless and needless, *ψ.* 4. and besides, it was proper that he should go up to heaven, and minister there, as the antitype of the priests, who to the example and shadow of heavenly things, served in the tabernacle which was made by Moses by the order of God, and according to the pattern shewed him in the mount, *ψ.* 5. and that the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary is much more excellent than the ministry of the priests in the shadowy one, is evident from his being the Mediator of a better covenant, *ψ.* 6. and that the covenant he is the Mediator of, is the better covenant, appears from the better promises of which it consists, and from the faultiness of the former covenant, *ψ.* 6, 7. and that that was faulty, and succeeded by another, he proves from a passage in *Jer.* xxxi. 31—34. in which mention is made of a *new* covenant, and as distinct from that made with the Jewish fathers, and violated by them; and several of the promises of this new and second covenant are rehearsed, and which manifestly appear to be better than what were in the former, *ψ.* 8—12. from all which the apostle concludes, that a new covenant being made, the old one must be antiquated; and that whereas it was decaying and waxing old, it was just ready to vanish away, *ψ.* 13.

NOW of the things which we have spoken *this is the sum*: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum] The scope and drift, the compendium and substance; or the principal of what has been said in, or from *Psalms* cx. 4. and has been discoursed of in the three preceding chapters, is the priesthood of Christ.

We have such an high priest] As is described in the foregoing discourse, and in the following words: Christ is a priest, an high priest, and the saints high priest; they are not without one under the Gospel-dispensation; and Christ is he, and always continues; in whose sacrifice and intercession they have a share.

Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens] He is set, whereas the Levitical priests stood; which shews that he has done his work, and that with acceptance; and is in a state of ease and rest; and is possessed of hon-

our, glory, majesty, and authority, and which continue: the place where he is set is, *on the right hand of the throne of the majesty*; the same with the right hand of God; for by the throne of the majesty is meant, God the Father in his royal glory and dignity; so *Tiphereth*, one of the ten numbers in the Jews Cabalistic tree, whose name is *Yehovah*, is called כִּסֵּא הַכְבוֹד “the throne of glory (e);” so angels are called thrones, *Col.* i. 16. but God is a throne of majesty superior to them; and at his right hand sits Christ the great high-priest; which is expressive of his high honour, glory, and power, and even of his equality with God: the phrase, *in the heavens*, may refer both to God the throne of majesty, who is there, and to Christ the high priest, who is passed into them, and received by them, and sits there.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

A minister of the sanctuary] The heavenly one, so called, in allusion to “the holy of holies,” the type of it; and because it is truly an holy place; and which Christ sanctifies and prepares for his people by his presence and intercession: or “of the holy ones, or saints;” who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are made holy by the Spirit of God; to these Christ is a minister; he was so in his prophetic office, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in his priestly office, to all the chosen ones, when on earth, offering himself a sacrifice for them; and now he is a minister to them in heaven, interceding for them; and in his kingly office, governing, protecting, and defending them: or “of holy things;” to his people, such as the gifts of his spirit, grace, and all supplies of it, and at last glory; and for them, presenting their sacrifices of prayer and praise to God, which become acceptable to him through his powerful mediation.

And of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man] By which is meant, not *heaven*, the same with the *sanctuary*, for this would be an unnecessary tautology, and an explanation of a word by another more obscure; nor is there any reason why it should be added, *which the Lord pitched, and not man*; since every one must believe that heaven is made by God alone; but rather the church of Christ, which is sometimes called a *tabernacle*, and is a *true* one, of which the tabernacle of Moses was a type; and is of God's building, and where Christ ministers, being the high priest over the house

(e) Lex. Cabal. p. 423.

house of God ; though it is best to interpret it of the human nature of Christ, in which he tabernacled among men, and which was typified by the tabernacle of Moses, and therefore is called the *true* one, in distinction from that ; for as there God dwelt, and his glory was seen, and he granted his presence to his people, and the sacrifices were brought and offered up there, and to this the people looked when at a distance, and this appeared very coarse without, but within full of holy things ; so in Christ's human nature the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily ; here the glory of God is seen, even in the face of Jesus ; and through him God vouchsafes communion with his people ; and by him the sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up ; and to him do the saints look for the acceptance of them : and though in the days of his flesh he looked very mean and despicable, yet was full of grace and truth, and of all the gifts of the Spirit : and the human nature of Christ was not of man ; it was not propagated by human generation, but was produced through the power of the holy Ghost ; and in this tabernacle Christ ministered when on earth, and now ministers in heaven.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices : wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices] See the note on chapter v. 1.

Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer] Or "this person;" for the word *man* is not in the text, and seems not so proper a word to be supplied, since it was his human nature that it was necessary he should have to offer ; he was a *person*, and existed as a divine person antecedent to his assumption of human nature : as God, he had nothing to offer, or that was capable of being offered ; something to offer as a sacrifice was necessary to him as a priest, but not any thing was proper to him : Levitical sacrifices would not do, these could not take away sin ; besides, the great high priest was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron, and therefore could not offer these. An angelic nature would have been improper, that is not capable of dying ; and the offering up of such an one would have been of no service to men, for whom priests are ordained ; but an human nature is meant, and which it was necessary Christ should have, and offer, for it is for men that he became an high priest, it was human nature that had offended God, and satisfaction must be made in

that nature ; and this was capable of suffering and dying ; yet not human nature under any consideration was necessary for him to have and offer ; not merely as in a state of innocence, without any infirmity, nor as sinful, yet as perfect as to parts and qualities : and a nature, and not a person was necessary to be had, and to be taken into close and inseparable union to his divine person ; and of this there was a necessity, not absolute, or a necessity of coercion and force : Christ was not forced unto it ; but on the foot of his suretyship-engagements, and because of making satisfaction for the sin of man, it was necessary ; otherwise Christ voluntarily engaged to be a priest, and willingly became man, and freely offered himself, soul and body, in the room and stead of his people.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law :

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest] The Socinians from hence attempt to prove that Christ was not a priest, and did not offer sacrifice on earth ; whereas his coming into the world, and his appearance in human nature, was in the character of a priest, and to qualify himself for one ; his death was his sacrifice, which was on earth ; and he never offered but one sacrifice ; and it was after he had offered himself that he went to heaven ; so the sacrifices under the law were first offered, before their blood was carried within : but the meaning is, either if *that* was on earth, namely, what it was necessary he should have to offer ; if his human nature had been earthly, had been of men, had come by ordinary generation, he had not been properly, only typically a priest, at most ; and had been no better than the typical ones ; yea, he would have been needless, nay might not have offered, not being of Levi's tribe, and could not have existed as a priest with the sons of Aaron ; but he had his human nature in another way, through the power of the holy Ghost from above, and therefore is said to come from above, from heaven, and to be the Lord from heaven : or the sense is, if he was on earth, and had not died, he had not been a priest ; and if he had died and remained under the power of death, he had been a priest of no account and use ; and had he rose again and remained on earth, without going to heaven, with his blood and sacrifice, he had not been a perfect priest ; if Christ had remained on earth, the Levitical priesthood had remained, and so he would have been no priest, since two priest-hoods could not have subsisted together. The Levitical priesthood was in force whilst Christ was on earth ; Christ's priesthood was not perfected

fect on earth; the Levitical priesthood remaining whilst he was on earth, proves he was not then a perfect priest, or had not completed his priesthood; had he been so, that would not have subsisted; it was necessary therefore that Christ should enter into the holy place, to put an end to the Levitical priesthood: moreover, if he had remained on earth, he had been needless.

Seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law] There were priests when Christ was upon earth; their work was to offer gifts the people brought, and sacrifices for sin, and that according to the law of Moses, which till the death of Christ was in full force.

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things] Things respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; the priests themselves were types of him; the places they ministered in were an exemplar of the heavenly places, as the word may be rendered, where Christ is; and the things they ministered were shadows of the good things which are by Christ; and the shadows were mere representations, dark, obscure, glimmering ones, and were fleeting and transitory.

As Moses was admonished of God] By an oracle; he was a peculiar favourite of God, and was the mediator between God and the people of Israel, and what he received was oracle-wise; what he delivered to the people was what he received from God; and what was thus delivered ought to be received as from God: and this admonition or oracle was given him,

When he was about to make the tabernacle] The Levitical one, with every thing appertaining to the worship of God in it; this is ascribed to Moses, though it was made by others, because it was by his direction, and under his care and oversight: and he had this admonition at the beginning of it; and at the finishing of it he looked upon it, and saw that it was all done as the Lord had commanded, *Exodus xxv. 40. and chapter xxxix. 43.*

For, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount] Moses was taken up into a mountain with God, even mount Sinai; and whilst he was there, a pattern was given him of the tabernacle and all its utensils; this was not a device of his own, but

was shewn him by God; and this pattern reached to every particular thing; and great care and circumspection were used that the most minute thing answered to it. The Jews think this pattern was given him by the ministry of angels; Gabriel, they say (e), girt himself with a girdle, and shewed to Moses the work of the candlestick; and they further say, that an ark of fire, and a table of fire, and a candlestick of fire, descended from heaven, and Moses saw them, and made according to them: from whence it may be observed, that the tabernacle, and tabernacle-worship, were of divine institution; the ceremonious rites of the Jews were not, as some have affirmed, borrowed from the Egyptians; nor were they given as diversions to that people, nor only to preserve them from idolatry, and keep them separate from others, but were designed to lead them to Christ, whom they were typical of; wherefore the abuse, and not the use of them, were condemned under the former dispensation; though they were to continue no longer than till Christ came, and suffered and died; and now they are abolished: moreover, it may be gathered from hence, that whatever is done in a way of religious worship, should be according to a divine rule; a church of Christ ought to be formed according to the primitive pattern, and should consist, not of all that are born in a nation, province, or parish; nor should all that are born of believing parents be admitted into it; no unholy, unbelieving, and unconverted persons, only such as are true believers in Christ, and who are baptized, according as the word of God directs: the officers of a church should be only of two sorts, bishops, elders, pastors or overseers, and deacons: the ordinances are baptism, which should only be administered to believers, and by immersion; and the Lord's supper, of which none should partake but those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and this should be performed as Christ performed it, and as the apostle Paul received it from him: the discipline of Christ's house should be regarded, and all the laws of it carefully and punctually put in execution; and a conversation becoming the Gospel should be attended to.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry] Christ has a ministry, he is the minister of the sanctuary, *1. 2.* he has obtained this ministry of

(e) T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 1.

his Father, he was called unto it and engaged in it by him; and he has *now* obtained it; for though he was called to it from eternity, it was in time he came an high priest of good things to come; and his ministry is a *more excellent* one than that of the priests, who offered gifts according to the law, and served to the example and shadow of heavenly things; as abundantly appears from the preceding chapter, and from this, as well as from what follows.

By how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant] The covenant of grace, as administered under the gospel-dispensation; which is not only better than the covenant of works, that being conditional, this absolute; that stood on the foot of works, this on the foot of grace, and is established in Christ; that being broken and made void, this continues; and not only better than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, which was but a typical one, and is now ceased, but also than the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation; being better than that, as to the manner of its manifestation, which is more full and clear; and as to the extent of its administration, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as to the ratification of it by the blood of Christ, called from thence the blood of the everlasting covenant; and as to the promises of it, here said to be better.

Which was established upon better promises] Which are not now delivered out as before, under the figure of earthly and temporal things; nor under a condition to be performed, nor confined to a particular people and nation; and which are attended with a greater measure of the Spirit to open and apply them; and are all secured in Christ Jesus, and confirmed by his blood: and now of this covenant Christ is *the mediator*; a mediator is of more persons than one, and of these at variance; and he is a middle person between both; and his business is, to bring both parties together, and make peace between them: the two parties in this case are God and man, set at a distance from each other by the sin of man, whereby man is become enmity to God; Christ is the mediator between God and man, a middle person between both, being both God and man, the *days-man*, who lays his hands on both; who brings men to God that were afar off, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, and satisfies the justice of God, which he has done by the sacrifice of himself; and now appears in the presence of God for them, and intercedes for them, and applies the blessings of the covenant to them by his Spirit, and keeps and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom; and for this

office he is every way fit, and in this he excels the Levitical priests, and has a ministry superior to theirs, since he is such a mediator, and a mediator of such a covenant.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

For if that first covenant had been faultless] Not the covenant of works; that was made in paradise, this on mount Sinai; that was made with Adam and his posterity, this with the Jews only; that had no mediator, this had one, Moses; that was not dedicated with blood, this was; that had not forgiveness of sin in it, this had; under that saints are not, but they were under this; to be under that was no privilege, but to be under this it was, as to the Israelites, who on this account were preferable to all other nations; nor is the pure covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel meant; for though that was first made, yet is the second in administration; that includes the elect of God among the Gentiles, this only the Jews; that is made only with them, and is made known to them whom God calls by his grace in time, this was made with good and bad; that was of pure grace, this required works in order to life and the enjoyment of its blessings; that is an everlasting covenant, this is done away; and the one is manifestly distinguished from the other in this chapter: but the *covenant* here designed is the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation, and which was a typical one; the people with whom it was made were typical of the true Israel of God; the blessings promised in it were shadows of good things to come; the works it required were typical of Christ's obedience to the law, in the room and stead of his people, by which he fulfilled it; the sacrifices on which it was established, were types of the sacrifice and death of Christ; the mediator of it, Moses, was a type of Christ, the mediator of the new covenant; and it was confirmed by the blood of beasts, which was typical of the blood of Christ: this covenant was not *faultless*, but was faulty or blame-worthy; not that there was any thing sinful and criminal in it, but it was deficient; there was a weakness in it; its sacrifices could not make men perfect, nor take away sin; there wanted a larger supply of the grace of the Spirit to write the law of God upon the heart, and to enable men to keep it; there was not in it so full a revelation of the mind and will of God, and of his love and grace, as has since been made; nor did it exhibit a free and full pardon for all sins, unclogged of every condition;

tion; the persons that were under it were faulty; hence it follows, that God found fault with them, they could not answer the requirements and end of it: had it been faultless,

Then should have no place been sought for the second] The covenant of grace unveiled in the Gospel-dispensation, called the *better testament*, the *better covenant*, and the *new covenant*; in order to introduce which, the first was removed, that this might succeed it; just as because there was no perfection by the Levitical priesthood, it became necessary that another priest should arise, of another order.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

For finding fault with them] Both with the covenant, which had its faults, and with the people, who continued not in it, and were therefore disregarded by the Lord, *Y. 9.*

He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah] The words are cited from *Jer. xxxi. 31, 32.* in which God promises a *new covenant*; so called, not because new made; for with respect to its original constitution, it was made from eternity; Christ the mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting; and promises and blessings of grace were put into his hands before the world began: nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam, and in some measure to all the Old Testament saints, though it is more clearly revealed than it was; but it is so called in distinction from the former administration of it, which is waxen old, and vanished away; and with respect to the order of succession, it taking place upon the former being removed; and on account of the time of its more clear revelation and establishment, being in the last days; and because of its mode of administration, which is different from the former, in a new way, and by the use of new ordinances; and because it is always new, its vigour and efficacy are perpetual; it will never be antiquated, or give place to another; and it provides for, and promises new things, a new heart, a new spirit, &c. to which may be added, that it is a famous, excellent covenant, there is none like it; just as an excellent song is called a *new song*. The persons with whom this covenant is promised to be made, are the houses of Israel and Judah; which being literally taken, had its

fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, through the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, by whom this covenant was made known to God's elect among the twelve tribes; but being mystically understood, includes both Jews and Gentiles, the whole Israel of God; Israel not after the flesh, but after the spirit; such as were Jews inwardly; God's elect of every nation; the word, *συστάσω*, rendered, "I will make," signifies, "I will consummate, or finish, or end, or fulfil it;" which shews the perfection of this covenant, and the imperfection of the former; and that what was typified in the first, is fulfilled in this; and that it is now established and ratified by Christ; and is so finished, as to the manifestation and administration of it, that there will be no alteration made in it, nor any addition to it: the time of doing all this is called *the days to come*; the last days, the days of the Messiah, which were future in Jeremiah's time; and a *behold* is prefixed to the whole, as a note of attention, this being an affair of great moment and importance; and as a note of demonstration, or as pointing to something that was desired and expected; and as a note of admiration, it containing things wonderful and marvellous.

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers] The ancestors of the Jews at mount Sinai.

In the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt] Which is mentioned, not only to observe the time when the former covenant was made with the Israelites, which was just upon their deliverance out of Egypt; but also to shew their weakness and inability to have delivered themselves, and the tenderness of God towards them; they were like children, they could not help themselves when God took them by the hand, and brought them forth with an outstretched arm; and likewise to expose their ingratitude, and vindicate his conduct towards them.

Because they continued not in my covenant] Though they promised, at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had said, they would hear and do; but their hearts were not right with God, and they were not steadfast in his covenant, and therefore their carcases fell in the wilderness.

And I regarded them not, saith the Lord] The words in *Jer.* xxxi. 32. are very differently rendered in our translation, *although I was an husband unto them*; and so it becomes an aggravation of their sin of ingratitude, in not continuing in his covenant: in the margin it is rendered interrogatively, "Should I have continued an husband unto them?" That is, after they had so treated him, no; as if he should say, "I will not behave towards them as such; I will reject them, and disregard them." The Chaldee paraphrase is just the reverse of the apostle's translation, "and I was well-pleased with them:" some render them, "I ruled over them," as a lord over his servants, in a very severe manner. Others observing the great difference there is between the Hebrew text, and the apostle's version, have supposed a different Hebrew copy from the present, used by the Septuagint, or the apostle, in which, instead of בָּרָא, it was read either בָּרָא or בָּרָא; but there is no need of such a supposition, since Dr Pocock (g) has shewn, that בָּרָא in the Arabic language, signifies "to lothe and abhor," "and so to disregard;" and Kimchi (h) relates it as a rule laid down by his father, that wherever this word is used in construction with בָּרָא it is to be taken in an ill part, and signifies the same as בָּרָא, "I have lothed," in which sense that word is used in *Zech.* xi. 8. and so here, "I have lothed them, I abhorred them, I rejected them, I took no care of them, disregarded them, left their house desolate, and suffered wrath to come upon them to the uttermost."

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel] That is, "this is the sum and substance of the covenant, which God promised to make with, or to make manifest and known to his chosen people, the true Israelites, under the Gospel dispensation;" or the following are the several articles of that covenant, he proposed to consummate or finish, as before.

After those days, saith the Lord] After the times of the Old Testament, when the Messiah shall be come, and the Gospel-day shall take place. So the Jews (i) apply these days, when they represent the Israelites saying to Moses, "O that

he (God) would reveal (himself or will) to us a second time! O that he would kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and that the doctrine of the law was fixed in our hearts!" When he (Moses) said to them, "This is not to be done now, but לעתיד לבוא "in the time to come," (that is, in the times of the Messiah) as it is said, *Jeremiah* xxxi. 33. *I will put my law, &c.* and so (k) they are elsewhere applied to the same times. And the first article in it is,

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts] By the laws of God are meant, not the precepts of the ceremonial law, which were now abrogated, but either the moral law, and its commands; which is a transcript of the divine nature, was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence, and some remains of it are even in the Gentiles, but greatly obliterated through the sin of man; and there is in men naturally a contrary disposition to it; in regeneration it is re-inscribed by the Spirit of God; and great respect is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies one part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word law signifies sometimes no other than a doctrine, an instruction, the doctrines of grace, of repentance towards God, of faith in Christ, and love to him, and every other doctrine may be intended; and the tables where, according to the tenor of this covenant, these are put and written, are two tables, as before, the mind and heart; but not two tables of stone, on which the law of Moses was written, partly that it might not be lost, through defect of memory, and partly to denote the firmness and stability of it, as also to point at the hardness of man's heart; but the fleshy tables of the heart; not that part of our flesh that is called the heart; but the souls of men, such hearts as are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and such minds as are renewed by him: and the putting of them into the mind, designs the knowledge of them, which God gives; as of the moral law, of its spirituality and perfection, shewing that there is no life and righteousness by it, that it is fulfilled by Christ, and is a rule of conversation to the saints; and of all other laws, ordinances, and doctrines of Christ: and the writing them in, or on the heart, intends a filling the soul with love and affection to them, so that it regards them singly and heartily; and a powerful inclination of the heart to be subject to them, through the efficacious grace of God; and which is done not with the ink of nature's power, but with the Spirit of the living God, *2 Cor.* iii. 3.

And I will be to them a God] Not in such sense as he is the God of all mankind, or as he was the God

(g) Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosi, p. 9.

(h) In Jer. xxxi. 32.

& Sepher Shorashim, rad. 572.

(i) Shabbathim Rabbis,

fol. 3. 2.

(k) Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 3.

God of Israel in a distinguishing manner, but as he is the God of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and he is their God, not merely as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; he is so in a covenant-way, and as in Christ, and by virtue of electing grace, and which is made manifest in effectual vocation; and as such, he has set his heart on them, and set them apart for himself; he saves them by his Son, adopts and regenerates them, justifies and sanctifies them, provides for them, protects and preserves them; and happy are they that are interested in this blessing of the covenant, which is preferable to every thing else; they have every thing, and can want no good thing; they need fear no enemy; all things work together for their good; and God continues to be their God in life and in death; so that they may depend on his love, be secure of his power, expect every needful supply of grace, and to be carried through every duty and trial, and to share in the first resurrection, and to enjoy eternal happiness.

And they shall be to me a people] Not in such sense as all mankind are, or the Jews were in a more peculiar respect, but as all God's elect are, whether Jews or Gentiles; and who are such whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, and with whom he has made a covenant in him; whom Christ saves from their sins by his blood, and calls them by his grace and Spirit, and who give up themselves to him; these are a distinct and peculiar people, a people near unto the Lord, and who are all righteous in Christ, and are made willing in the day of his power on their souls.

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour] The Alexandrian copy reads, *citizen*; that is, fellow-citizen; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions.

And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord] This is not to be understood, so as to set aside the external and public ministry of the word, which is a standing ordinance of God under the Gospel-dispensation; or even the private instructions of saints to one another, in christian conversation, whereby they may build up one another in their most holy faith; but the sense is, that men should not only teach, but the Spirit of God should teach with them, and by them; and it stands opposed to particular and pretended revelations, and especially to magisterial dictates;

and denotes the abundance of knowledge that should be in Gospel-times, which should not be restrained to particular persons, and sets of men, but should be shared by all believers, more or less.

For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest] From babes to fathers in Christ; not with a natural, but with a spiritual knowledge; not with a general knowledge of him, that he is; but with a special knowledge of him, that he is theirs; not with a legal, but with an evangelical knowledge; not with the knowledge of him in and through the creatures, but in Christ; and that not speculative, but experimental and practical; such as is attended with faith in him, fear of him, love to him, and a chearful obedience to his will: the knowledge of the Lord, under the New Testament dispensation, is greater than under the former dispensation; the subject-matter of it is more distinct; God is more known in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; the manner of it is more clear, open, and perspicuous; the persons to whom it is communicated are more numerous; it is not restrained to Jews, but is given to the Gentiles; and all this owing to a greater effusion of the Spirit; see 1 John ii. 27.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness] That is, sin; for all unrighteousness is sin, being contrary to the justice of God, and his righteous law: and the phrase is expressive of God's forgiveness of it, which is a very considerable article of the covenant of grace; mercy is the spring and original of pardon; it is what God delights in, and therefore he pardons freely; it is large and abundant, and hence he pardons fully; and this lays a foundation for hope in sensible sinners: and the way and means in and by which God pardons, is the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son; and the word here rendered *merciful*, signifies *propitious*; God pardons none but those to whom he is pacified, or rendered propitious by Christ; there is no mercy, nor pardon, but through him; he pardons on the foot of reconciliation and satisfaction for sin by Christ; so that forgiveness of sin is an act of justice, as well as of mercy; or it is an act of mercy streaming through the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

And their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more] By which are meant all kinds of sin, original and actual; sins before and after conversion;

sion; every sin but that against the holy Ghost, and that God's covenant-people are never guilty of; these God remembers no more; he casts them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, so that when they are sought for, they shall not be found; God will never charge them with them, or punish them for them: this is another phrase to express the forgiveness of sins, and distinguishes the new covenant from the old one, or the former dispensation; in which, though there were many typical sacrifices, and a typical removal of sin, yet there was a remembrance of it every year.

13 In that he saith, *A new covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

In that he saith, A new covenant] In the above prophecy, *ψ. 8.*

He hath made the first old] This naturally follows from hence; if the second is new, the first must be old; which is called so, not on account of its date and duration; for the covenant of grace itself is older than this mode of administration of it, and the manifestation of that to the patriarchs was before this covenant, and so was the covenant of works before it; but on the account of its faultiness and deficiency, its weakness, and unprofitableness, and especially its being antiquated, and made to give way to another.

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away] The apostle argues from the first covenant, being old, to its being near to dissolution, or a disappearance; and the dissolution or disappearance of this covenant was gradual; it began when the Chaldeans seized the land of Canaan; and the ark, an eminent type of Christ, being wanting in the second temple, gave a hint of its waxing old; and both the civil and ecclesiastical government of the Jews were in great confusion under the second temple, at least towards the close of it; and even before the times of Christ, John the Baptist came, and proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, and his kingdom: this covenant was of right abolished at the time of Christ's death; upon his ascension the Spirit was given, and the Gospel published among all nations, by which it more and more disappeared; and in fact it quite vanished away, when the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed, which was in a little time after the writing of this epistle; so that the apostle, with great propriety, says, *it is ready to vanish away.*

The apostle having, in the former chapter, taken notice of the first covenant, in this proceeds to shew what belonged to it, that it had service performed under it, and a place in which it was performed, *ψ. 1.* and he begins with the latter, which he distinguishes into two parts, and shews what was in each of them; in the first, which was the holy place, were a candlestick, table, and shewbread; in the second, which was the holiest of all, were a golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat, *ψ. 2—5.* And next he speaks of the service performed in these places; in the first, the holy place, the common priests entered every day, doing service, as offering sacrifice, *Ec. ψ. 6.* and in the second, the holy of holies, only the high priest entered into, and that but once a year, with blood of slain beasts, which he offered for his own sins, and the sins of the people, *ψ. 7.* and this being shut up, and entered into but once a year, was an indication from the holy Ghost, that the way into the holiest of all, which this was then a figure of, was not yet made manifest, whilst the tabernacle or temple was standing, in which sacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the offerer of them, or remove guilt from his conscience, *ψ. 8, 9.* which shews the imperfection of that priesthood, it consisting of meats, drinks, baptisms, and carnal ordinances imposed on the Jewish nation until the times of the Messiah, *ψ. 10.* which are now come, and in which there is an accomplishment of all those types and figures, Christ was typified by the high priest; and he is come as such, and the good things, the law was a shadow of, are come by him; who came into the world by the assumption of human nature, a more perfect tabernacle than the type of it was; and now having obtained eternal redemption for his people, he is gone into heaven, the most holy place, not as the high priest, with the blood of slain beasts, but with his own blood, *ψ. 11, 12.* the efficacy of which blood is argued from the lesser to the greater, that if the blood of beasts, and water of separation, sanctified and purified externally, then much more must the blood of Christ purge the conscience from sin, that it may serve God, since Christ offered himself to God without spot, through the eternal Spirit, *ψ. 13, 14.* The necessity of Christ's shedding his blood, or of his death, is proved from his being the mediator of the new covenant,

nant, which required the redemption of transgressions under the first testament, that called ones might have the promise of the eternal inheritance, *ψ*. 15. And this is reasoned from the nature of testaments or wills among men, which make the death of the testator necessary, they being of no force while he lives, only after his death, *ψ*. 16, 17. And this is further illustrated by the first testament being dedicated by blood, and every thing belonging to it purged by it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of it; nor is there any remission of sin, whether typical or real, without shedding of blood, *ψ*. 18—22. wherefore, as it was necessary that the patterns and types of heavenly things should be purified in this manner; it must be more so, that the anti-types should be purified with better sacrifices, even with the sacrifice of Christ, *ψ*. 23. and accordingly Christ is entered into heaven itself, of which the holy places in the tabernacle were figures, there to present and plead his sacrifice on account of his people, *ψ*. 24. not that it was necessary that he should offer up himself again, or often, as the high priest, his type, went every year into the holy place with the blood of others; for then he must have often suffered since the world began, of which there was no need, since his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is sufficient, *ψ*. 25, 26. for as it is the appointment of God, that men should die but once, and then come to judgment, so it was only necessary that Christ should be offered once to bear the sins of all his people, and then appear a second time without any sin at all upon him, to the salvation of those that look for him, *ψ*. 27, 28.

THEN verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service] The design of the apostle in this chapter, as it stands in connection with what goes before, is to shew the preeminence of Christ, from the tabernacle and the things in it, as well as from the priesthood and covenant; and as also the abrogation of the Levitical ceremonies in particular, as well as the first covenant in general; and that they were all types and figures of Christ, and had their fulfilment in him: the word *first*, here used, designs not the tabernacle, but the covenant; therefore it is rightly thus supplied in our version, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: which is said to have ordinances of divine

service; belonging to the service of God, which was performed both by the priests and by the people; and these ordinances were no other than the carnal ordinances, or rites of the ceremonial law: the word used signifies *righteousnesses*; and they are so called, because they were appointed by a righteous God; and were imposed on the people of the Jews in a righteous way; and by them men became externally and typically righteous; for they were figures and types of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though no compleat, perfect, real righteousness came by them.

And a worldly sanctuary] Philo the Jew says (*l*), "It was a type of the world and of the various things in it;" though it was rather either a type of the church, or of heaven, or of Christ's human nature: the better reason of its being so called is, because it consisted of earthly matter, and worldly things; it was in the world, and only had its use in the world, and so is opposed to the heavenly sanctuary; for the Jews often speak of המקדש שלמעלה "a sanctuary above;" and המקדש שלמטה "a sanctuary below (*m*);" and of משכנתא לעילא "a tabernacle above;" and משכנתא לתתא "a tabernacle below (*n*);" which answer to one another: the words may be rendered "a beautiful sanctuary," a well-adorned one; and such especially was the temple, or sanctuary built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubabel, and repaired and adorned by Herod, Luke xxi. 5. And the Jews say, that he that never saw Herod's building, meaning the temple, never saw a beautiful building; see Luke xxi. 5.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

For there was a tabernacle made] By the direction of Moses, according to the pattern shewed him in the mount.

The first] That is, the first part of the tabernacle, called the holy place, in distinction from the holy of holies, which was the second part of the tabernacle; for otherwise there were not a first and a second tabernacle; there never was but one tabernacle.

Wherein was the candlestick] That this was in the tabernacle, and on the southside of it, and without the vail, where the apostle has placed it, is plain from Exodus xxvi. 35. and chap. xl. 24.

This

(*l*) De Vita Moysi, p. 667.

(*m*) Jarchi in Gen. xxviii. 17.

(*n*) Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 4. & 94. 4. & 96. 2. & in Lev. fol. 1. 3.

This was wanting in the second temple (o) : it was a type of Christ mystical, or the church ; in the general use of it, to hold forth light, so the church holds forth the light of the Gospel ; being put into it by Christ ; in the matter of it, which was pure gold, denoting the purity, worth, splendor, glory, and duration of the church ; in the parts of it, it had one shaft in the middle of it, in which all the parts met and cemented, typical of Christ the principal, and head of the church, whose situation is in the midst of the church, and who unites all together, and is but one : the six branches of it may intend all the members of the church, and especially the ministers of the word ; the seven lamps with oil in them, may have a respect to the seven spirits of God, or the Spirit of God with his gifts and graces, and a profession of religion with grace along with it : and it was typical of the church in its ornaments and decorations ; its bowls, knops, and flowers, may signify the various gifts of the Spirit, beautifying ministers, and fitting them for usefulness ; and in the appurtenances of it, the tongs and snuff-dishes may signify church discipline, censures, and excommunications.

And the table, and the shewbread] The table, with the shewbread on it, was also in the tabernacle, on the north side of it, and without the veil, *Exodus* xxvi. 35. and chap. xl. 22. This was also wanting in the second temple (p) : the table was typical of Christ, and of communion with him ; of the person of Christ ; in the matter of it, which was Shittim wood overlaid with gold, whereby were signified the two natures of Christ in one person ; the human nature by the Shittim wood, which is incorruptible, for though he died he saw no corruption, and is risen again, and lives for ever ; and the divine nature by the gold, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him ; and in the decorations of it, as the border, golden crown, &c. which may respect the fulness of his grace, and the honour and glory he is crowned with, which render him exceeding valuable and precious : and it may be typical of communion with him, either hereafter, when the saints shall sit with him as at a table, and eat and drink with him in the kingdom of his Father ; or here, to which Christ admits them, and than which nothing is more honourable, comfortable, and desirable ; and it may be significative of the ministration of the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance, and in which he grants his people fellowship with him : to this table belonged rings and bars, to carry it from

place to place, which was done by the priests : where the church is, there Christ is, and there is the ministration of his word and ordinances ; and which are sometimes moved from one place to another, by the ministers of the word, according to divine direction. The *shewbread*, on the table, was typical either of the church of Christ, the saints, who may be signified by the unleavened cakes, being true and sincere, and without the leaven of malice and hypocrisy ; and by twelve of them, which may represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the whole spiritual Israel of God ; and by *bread of faces*, as the word for shewbread may be rendered, since they are always before the Lord, and his eyes are continually upon them ; they are set upon the pure table, Christ, on whom they are safe, and by whom they are accepted with God : and the shewbread being set in rows, may denote their order and harmony ; and their being removed every sabbath-day, may signify the succession of saints in the church, as one is removed, another is brought in ; and the frankincense put upon each row, shews them to be a sweet savour to God : or else the shewbread was typical of Christ himself, who is the bread of life, the food of his people ; and may be signified by the shewbread for its fineness and purity, being made of fine flour ; Christ is the finest of the wheat, bread from heaven, and angels food : for its quantity, twelve cakes ; with Christ is bread enough and to spare, for all the elect ; for its continuance, Christ always abides, and such as feed upon him live for ever ; for its gratefulness, Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed ; and for its being only for the priests, as only such who are made priests to God, live by faith on Christ ; see *Lev.* xxv. 15—9. Moreover, the intercession of Christ may be prefigured by the shewbread, or bread of faces, he being the angel of God's presence or face, who appears in the presence of God for his people ; and this consisting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, shews, that Christ represents the whole Israel of God in heaven, and intercedes for them : and whereas the shewbread always continued, no sooner was one set of loaves removed, but another was put in their room ; this may point at the continual intercession of Christ for his people ; and the frankincense may denote the acceptableness of it to God.

Which is called the sanctuary] Or *holy* ; this refers either to the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in which the priests in common ministered ; or else to the things which were in it, now mentioned, the candlestick, table, and shewbread ; to which the Ethiopic version adds, and the golden censer, which it leaves out in

(o) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.
Israel Conclit. in Gen. 41.

(p) Megashah ben

in the fourth verse; which version renders these words, "and these they call holy;" and so the Arabic version, "which are called holy things;" as they were, as well as the place in which they were; so the candlestick is called the holy candlestick in *Ecclesiasticus* xxvi. 17. and the ark, candlestick, table, censer, and altar, are called קְדֻשִׁים קְדֻשִׁים "holy vessels," by Philo the Jew (q): but the former sense seems best, when compared with the following verse.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

And after the second veil] Were there more veils than one? The scripture speaks but of one, *Exod.* xxvi. 31. there was indeed an hanging for the door of the tent, but that is not called a veil; nor was there more than one veil in the tabernacle, nor in the temple of Solomon; but in the second temple, under which the apostle lived, there were two veils, which divided between the holy place, and the holy of holies; and the innermost of these the apostle means: and so the Jewish writers (r) constantly affirm, that there were two veils between the said places, and that two new ones were made every year (s). So on the day of atonement, when the high priest went into the most holy place, with the incense, it is said (t); that "He walked in the temple till he came between שְׁתֵּי הַפָּרוֹכֹת "the two veils," which "divided between the holy and holy of holies, and "there was the space of a cubit between them." The reason of these two veils may be seen in the account Maimonides gives of this matter (u): "In the first temple there was a wall which divided between the holy and holy of holies, the "thickness of a cubit; but when they built the "second temple, it was doubted by them, whether "the thickness of the wall was of the measure of "the holy place, or of the measure of the holy "of holies; wherefore they made the holy of "holies twenty cubits compleat, and the holy "place forty cubits compleat, and they left the "space of a cubit between the holy, and the holy "of holies; and they did not build a wall in the "second temple, but they made, שְׁתֵּי פָרוֹכֹת two "veils, one on the side of the holy of holies, "and the other on the side of the holy place, and "between them a cubit answerable to the thickness of the wall, which was in the first temple; "but in the first temple there was but one veil

"only, as it is said, *Exod.* xxvi. 33. and the veil "shall divide unto you, &c." And to this account other Jewish writers (w) agree; and the space between the two veils is called by them, מִקְדָּשׁ (x) תַּרְסִיס, from the trouble and perplexity this affair gave them. This veil, or veils, might represent the sins of man, which separates between God and men, excludes from heaven; but is removed by the death of Christ, when the veil was rent in twain; so that now there is an open way to heaven; Christ has entered into it by his own blood; and saints have boldness to enter there by faith and hope now, and shall hereafter personally enter into it. Or else this veil may signify the ceremonial law, which separated between Jew and Gentile, and is abolished by the death of Christ: or rather it was typical of the flesh, or human nature of Christ, called the veil of his flesh, *Heb.* x. 20. see the note there. Now within this second veil was

The tabernacle] Or that part of it, the second part,

Which is called the Holiest of all] Which was either typical of Christ, who is called the most holy, *Dan.* ix. 24. he being so in both natures, divine and human; or of heaven, for the holy places, made with hands, were figures of heaven, *1.* 24. for its holiness; it being the habitation of the holy God, holy angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; and for its invisibility, and the unseen things which faith and hope, which enter within the veil, are the evidence of; and for the things that are in it, typified by the following ones.

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

Which had the golden censer] There were various censers used by the priests in the daily service, but this was a peculiar one, which was used by the high priest on the day of atonement; on other days he used a silver censer, but on that day a golden one, and with it he entered into the holy of holies (y); and though Moses does not call it a golden one, *Lev.* xvi. 12. yet Josephus does (z); and so do the Jewish doctors in the place referred to,

(g) De Vita Moysi, l. 3. p. 668.

(r) T. Bab. Yoma, fol.

54. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. Vid. Philo de Vita Moysi,

l. 7. p. 667. (s) Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. §. 5. Maimon.

Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. §. 16. (t) Misna Yoma, c. 5. §. 1.

Vid. Bereshit Rabbo, §. 10, fol. 8. 3. (u) Hilchot Beth

Habbechira, c. 4. §. 2.

(w) Gloss. & Tosephot in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 51. 2. & Ber-

hora in Misn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1. & in Middot, c. 4. §. 7.

(x) Misn. Middot ibid. & T. Bab. Yoma ibid. & Gloss. in T.

Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. (y) Misn. Yoma, c. 4. §. 4.

Maimon, Yom Hacippurim, c. 2. §. 5. (z) Antiq. l. 3.

c. 8. §. 3.

to, with whom the apostle agrees, and to this the allusion is in *Rev.* viii. 3. But here a difficulty arises, how this can be said to have been in the holy of holies, and within the veil, when, according to Moses, it was without the veil, and was only carried within on the day of atonement; and so Philo the Jew (*a*) places it in the other part of the tabernacle; and it seems as if it was to avoid this difficulty, that the Ethiopic version has removed it from this verse to verse the second, and put it among the things that were in the holy place; but there is no need of this, nor to say that the altar of incense is intended, for that is never so called, and besides, was without the veil too. It should be observed, that the apostle does not say, that the golden censer was laid up in the holy of holies, and kept there, but that it *had* it; as it had it on the day of atonement, when it was carried in there by the high priest, who there made use of it; and it was for the use of it in that place that it was peculiarly designed. What was done by it, was this, burning coals were with it taken off from the altar before the Lord, and were brought in within the veil, where incense was put upon them, which covered the mercyseat, that so the high priest died not. The burning coals signify the very great sufferings of Christ, not only the sufferings of his body, which were very painful, but those of his soul, when the wrath and hot displeasure of God was poured out upon him; and those coals being taken off from the altar before the Lord, shew, that the sufferings of Christ were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; and their being brought within the veil, does not denote that Christ is now in a suffering state, though he is in the midst of the throne, as a Lamb that had been slain; but the continued virtue and efficacy of his sufferings, and that our faith and hope, which enter within the veil, have to do with his blood and sacrifice thither carried. And the incense, which was carried in with those coals, typified the intercession of Christ in heaven, which is pure and holy, sweet, fragrant, and perpetual; and the priest having his hands full of it, expresses the fulness of Christ's intercession for all his elect, and for all things for them, and his fulness of merit to plead, which makes his intercession efficacious and prevalent; and hence, through his much incense, the prayers of his people become odorous and acceptable: and the incense being put upon the burning coals in the censer, shews, that Christ's intercession proceeds upon the foot of his blood and sacrifice, his sufferings and

death; and hence it becomes grateful, and has its influence; the smoke of it covers the mercyseat, or throne of grace, and makes that accessible; and as the priest who offers it never dies, so none of those for whom he intercedes.

And the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold] This is called the ark of the covenant, because the tables of the covenant, afterwards mentioned, were put into it; and that it was overlaid with gold round about, is certain from *Exodus* xxv. 11. where it is said to be overlaid with pure gold, within and without; and that the ark was within the veil, and in the most holy place, is manifest from *Exodus* xl. 21. *2 Chronicles* v. 7. that this was wanting in the second temple, is generally agreed (*b*); but who took it away, where it was put, or what became of it, various are the sentiments of the Jewish writers: some say (*c*), it was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon, and is meant by the *goodly vessels* of the house of the Lord, *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 10. others say (*d*), that Jeremiah the prophet took it, and hid it in a cave on mount Nebo; but the more generally received opinion is, that it was hid by king Josiah in some hidden and deep place, which Solomon had built for that purpose under ground, knowing that the temple would be destroyed (*e*); and it is often said, that it was hid under the pavement of a room in the temple, called *חדר העץ* לשכח העץ "the wood room (*f*). The ark is, by some, thought to be a type of the church, which is the ark of God, of his building, and where he dwells; the ark of the covenant, or testimony, where the oracles of God, his word and ordinances are: its being made of Shittim wood may denote the incorruption and duration of it; and its being covered with gold within and without, is expressive of its glory; and its being portable, and carried from place to place, shews, that the church is not always in one place; its rings, staves, and priests that bore it, may point at the Gospel, and the ministers of it, the instruments of moving it; and its moving from place to place, and falling into the hands of enemies, were emblematical of the church's afflictions; as its rests at last, in Solomon's temple, may signify the church's rest here and hereafter. But the ark is rather to be considered as a type of Christ;

(*a*) De Vita Mosi. l. 3. p. 668. See Weems on the Ceremonial Law, p. 48.

(*b*) T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 27. 2. & Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Menaissah ben Israel. Concil. in Gen. qu. 41. Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.
(*c*) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Sefer Olam Rabba, c. 25. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. (*d*) Joseph. ben Gorion, l. 1. c. 17. *2 Maccab.* ii. 4, 5. (*e*) T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. Maimon. Beth Hab-bechira, c. 4. § 1. (*f*) Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. § 2, 2. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 2.

Christ; its various names agree with Christ, as, the ark of God, the ark of his strength, the glory of God, the face of God, the holy ark, the ark of the covenant, or testimony, yea *Jehovah*, and God himself: the time of its making is observable, it was made before the tabernacle, and the tabernacle for the sake of it; Christ is before all creatures, and was set up as Mediator before any thing existed, and all things are for his sake; it being made of Shittim wood covered with gold, may denote both the incorruption and glory of Christ: and its several decorations the graces with which he was adorned, as man and mediator; its staves and rings may design the word, ordinances, and ministers, whereby he is carried into the several places of the world; here God granted his presence, and counsel was asked of him, and it was brought forth in time of war, as a security from enemies, all which is applicable to Christ; by it wonders were done, as the dividing of Jordan for the Israelites to pass into the land of Canaan, the falling of the walls of Jericho, and the fall of Dagon; so Christ has opened the way for his people to heaven, has spoiled principalities and powers, and his Gospel is powerful to the pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan; the moving of the ark from place to place, and its rest in the temple, may signify the rest of Christ, after his many fatigues in this world.

Wherein was the golden pot that had manna Which Aaron filled with manna by the direction of Moses, who gave it at the appointment of God, that it might be preserved to future ages, as a memorial of the goodness, care, and power of God in feeding the Israelites with it in the wilderness, *Exodus xvi. 33, 34.* This pot held an *omer*, which was more than three pints and a half, some say six pints: and though Moses does not call it a golden pot, yet it is so called, not only by the Septuagint in *Exodus xvi. 33.* but also by Philo the Jew (*g*); nor is it reasonable to think, with some Jewish writers (*h*), that it should be made of earth, which was to continue for ages to come: this also was wanting in the second temple (*i*); and this, with Aaron's rod, after mentioned, and other things, is said to be hid when the ark was, and along with it (*k*): but how this pot, as well as Aaron's rod, can be said to be in the ark, when it is asserted, at the bringing of the ark into the temple, at the dedication of it by Solomon, that there was nothing in it

but two tables of stone, *1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10.* and both the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod, are said to be before the testimony, *Exodus xvi. 34. Numb. xvii. 10.* and not in it, is a difficulty. Some, in order to remove it, observe, that the phrase, *wherein*, refers not to the ark, but to the tabernacle; but since the tables of the covenant were in the ark, and these are mentioned with it, and the phrase, *over it*, in the next verse, cannot be understood of the tabernacle, but of the ark, this solution is not satisfactory. Others have observed, that they might be in the ark in Moses's time, and in Jeremiah's time, when they are said to be hid, though they were not in Solomon's: and others have taken notice, that the preposition *in*, sometimes signifies *at*, or *with*, as in *Col. iii. 1. John i. 28. Eph. vi. 1, 2.* and so the sense is, that these were near unto it in the most holy place, and might be in the sides of it, though not within it; for there were places in the sides of the ark to put things into, *Deut. xxxi. 26. 1 Sam. vi. 8.* And certain it is from the above account from scripture, that they were near it; and so, by the Jewish writers, they are always mentioned along with it; when that was carried away, and hid, they were hid with it: but what a certain Jewish commentator (*l*) observes on *1 Kings viii. 9.* is so express, as if it was designed to vindicate our apostle: his remark is this; "The intention of this is not to deny that there were not the things mentioned in the law, for there were, *וְהַמָּנָה וְהַמִּזְבֵּחַ* left in it, as Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna; only to deny, hereby, that there was not any thing of the law, save the decalogue." And it should be observed, that it is not said of these, that they were put before the ark, but *before the testimony*; that is, before the tables of the covenant, which were within the ark. The manna, in this pot, was typical of Christ; in the signification of its name, whether it comes from *מָנָה* *manah*, which signifies "to appoint, prepare, and distribute;" Christ being appointed, prepared, and distributed, as food for his people; or from *מָן* *man hu*, "What is it?" the words said by the Israelites, when they first saw it, not knowing what it was; so Christ is unknown to his people until revealed to them, and remains unknown to all natural and unregenerate men: the manna came from heaven, from God, and was a free gift of his, and so Christ: it was round in form, and may be expressive of Christ's perfection, and eternity: it was in colour white, which may signify his purity and

(g) De Cong. Quer. Erud. Græc. p. 438.

(h) Mechilta,

fol. 20. 1. & Tanchuma, fol. 29. 4.

(i) Menasseh ben

Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 47.

(k) T. Hieros. Shekalim,

fol. 49. 3. & Seta, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Berotot, fol. 5. 2. &

Horayot, fol. 22. 1. Maimon. Beth Habschira, c. 4. §. 1.

(l) R. Levi ben Gerson in *1 Kings viii. 9.* & others in *Lanlado Celi Yekar* in loc.

and innocence: it was sweet in taste, and so is Christ, his fruits, his word and ordinances: it was small in quantity, which may denote the meanness and despicableness of Christ in the eyes of the world: the people went out and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and baked it, and eat, which may be the typical of the apprehension, sufferings, and death of Christ, in order to be fit food for the faith of believers. The persons that were fed by it were the Israelites, who were brought out of Egypt, and then in the wilderness, a large number, and men of all sorts, rich and poor, and who had an equal portion, though very undeserving; so those who are fed by Christ, and nourished with him, the bread of life, are the spiritual Israel of God, whom Christ has redeemed from worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness, though they are yet in the wilderness of this world; and they are a large number, the whole family of God, who receive out of Christ's fulness grace for grace; and there is no difference of high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, male or female; they are all one in Christ, and Christ is all in all; and they have all a whole Christ, though they are very undeserving, being by nature children of wrath as others. And as the Israelites had the manna every day, and all the while they were in the wilderness, so Christ is the daily bread of believers; by him, in his word and ordinances, is his church nourished in the wilderness, to whom he gives to eat of the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness. The *pot*, in which this manna was kept, was typical of the ordinances of the Gospel; in its matter, being made of gold, denoting the preciousness and duration of them; in the bigness of it, holding an *omer*, shewing that these contain plenty of good things to satisfaction; in the situation of it *before* the ark, signifying the presence of Christ with his ordinances; and in its use to hold manna, and be a memorial of it to ages to come; as the ordinances have in them food for souls, and are the means of remembering Christ in future generations, till his second coming.

And Aaron's rod that budded] And not only budded, but bloomed, blossomed, and yielded almonds, *Numb.* xvii. 8. This also was laid before the ark of the testimony, *Exod.* xvi. 34. and may be said to be *in* it, or *with* it, in the same sense as the pot of manna was; it was likewise wanting in the second temple (*m*), and is said to be hid with the pot of manna, and other things, as before observed: it was a type of Christ. It is affirmed by the Jews, that in the days of the Mes-

siah, the priesthood shall return, and the rod of Aaron shall flourish (*n*); it was very probable, as some have thought (*o*), an almond-tree stick, as that in *Jer.* i. 11, 12. The almond-tree has its name in Hebrew from a word which signifies haste and vigilance; it being, as Pliny says (*p*), the first of trees that buds and blossoms, and is very hasty in putting them forth. An almond-tree rod may be a proper emblem of Christ's speedy incarnation in the fulness of time; and Aaron's almond-tree rod, of his right to the priesthood, and his vigilance in it: this was first a dry rod or stick, and may design the meant descent and appearance of Christ, being born of mean parents, living a mean and obscure life; his entrance on his public ministry, and continuance in it, were without any pomp or grandeur; he was as a root out of a dry ground; and though he did many miracles, these were treated with contempt; and he was at last apprehended, arraigned, and condemned as a malefactor, and died a shameful and an accursed death: it looked full as unlikely and unpromising, that he should be the king Messiah; that he should have all power in heaven and in earth; that he should have the wisdom he had, and do the miracles he did; and that he should be the author of eternal salvation; and that such fruits of grace, peace, pardon, and righteousness, should spring from him; as that Aaron's dry rod should bud, blossom, and bear almonds; in which it was a lively figure of Christ, that lying among other rods, and perhaps being like them, may denote Christ's assuming the common nature of men, or an individual of human nature, in all things like to man; and this being cut off from the tree, and being a dry stick, may represent the death of Christ; and its budding and blossoming may point at the resurrection of Christ from the dead; and as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding and blossoming of his rod, so the Deity and Messiahship of Christ are confirmed by his resurrection; and its bringing forth almonds, may design the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; and moreover, the almond-tree being, as Philo the Jew says (*q*), the first of trees that buds and blossoms in the spring, and the last that casts its leaves; it may be, as he observes, a symbol of the priestly tribe; and it may be a figure of the perpetuity of Christ, and his priesthood.

And the tables of the covenant] The same with the testimony which was ordered to be put into the

(*m*) Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41.

(*n*) Baal Hatturim in Num. xvii. 5. (*o*) Joseph. Antiq. l. 4. c. 4. §. 2. Aben Ezra in Num. xvii. 8. (*p*) Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25. (*q*) De Vita Moysi, l. 3. p. 631.

the ark, and accordingly was, *Exodus* xxv. 16, 21. and chap. xl. 20. *Deut.* x. 2, 5. About this there is no controversy; though it is a matter of dispute with the Jews, whether the book of the law was in the ark or no: some say it was in the side of it, and others within it (*r*); but Maimonides (*s*) says, that "Moses wrote the whole law with his own hand before he died, and gave a book (or copy) to every tribe, and one copy he put בְּאֵרֶן "in the ark." So Jarchi says (*t*), that "the book of the law of Moses was put into the midst of the ark, and the ark was glorious and beautiful by that which was בְּאֵרֶן "within it." These tables were made of stone, an emblem of the hardness of man's heart, which is destitute of spiritual life and motion, senseless and stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, and on which no impressions can be made but by powerful and efficacious grace; and also of the stability and duration of the law, as moral, which is not antiquated by another, nor made void by the Gospel, nor altered in its nature and terms, but remains the same as to the matter of it; though it is now no covenant of works to believers, and they are freed from the curse and condemnation of it. The number of these tables is two; the whole law is reduced by our Lord to two grand precepts of it, *Matt.* xxii. 37—40. and the *fleshy tables*, on which it is re-inscribed in regeneration, are the heart and mind, *2 Cor.* iii. 3. *Hebrews* viii. 10. The place where these tables were put, is the ark, which was typical of the law being in Christ, not only in his hands, but in his heart, *Psalms* xl. 8. and in his keeping, of which he is the fulfilling end; for he being the surety of his people, and becoming man, answered every part of the law; in the holiness of his nature, in the perfect obedience of his life, and in his sufferings and death, in which he bore the penalty of it: and these tables are called "the tables of the covenant," because the law on mount Sinai was a covenant made with the people of Israel; and was typical of the covenant of which Christ is the surety and mediator, and which is ratified by his blood.

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

And over it the cherubims of glory Or glorious cherubim, where the Shechinah, or divine glory, dwelt, *Psalms* lxxx. 1. These were over the ark, and were in number two, as were the cherubim which

God placed at the garden of Eden, *Genesis* iii. 24. according to the opinion of the ancient Jews (*u*); and very likely these were made after the form of them. Some have thought them to be birds of a very terrible aspect, which were set there to deter Adam and Eve from coming to the tree of life; and both Philo (*w*) and Josephus (*x*) say, "they were winged fowls;" but the generality of the Jewish writers take them for angels (*y*); and some of them say they were destroying angels, or noxious spirits (*z*), which is not probable; but why angels should be so called, and what was their appearance, there are different opinions. Jerom says (*a*), the word signifies "a multitude of knowledge;" and indeed Philo the Jew (*b*) observes, that the Greeks would interpret the Hebrew word, "much knowledge and understanding;" and another Jewish writer (*c*) affirms, that the word *cherubim* is a name for separate intelligences; as if angels were so called from their great knowledge, and that the word is the same as *cerabbim*, "as Rabbins," doctors, or teachers; but for the most part they interpret it, "as young men (*d*)," because that angels have appeared in the form of young men. So in the Talmud (*e*) it is asked, "What does *cherub* signify? Says R. Abhu, רַבִּיּוֹת "as a young man," "for so in Babylon they call a young man, רַבִּיּוֹת." Some think that the word cherub, is the same with רַבִּיּוֹת *recub*, the letters transposed, which signifies a *chariot*, because God is said to ride upon a cherub, and the angels are called the chariots of the Lord, *Psalms* xviii. 10. and lxviii. 17. *Zech.* vi. 1, 5. to which may be added, that Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim is frequently, by the Jews (*f*), called מֵרַבִּיּוֹת "mercabah, or the chariot;" and mention is made of the chariot of the cherubim, in *1 Chronicles* xxviii. 18. to which reference may be had in *Hab.* iii. 8. though I rather think, with others, that the word is derived from רַבִּיּוֹת *carab*, which in the Syriac and Arabic languages signifies to *plow*; and so in the Talmud (*g*) a cherub took its name from hence, because of the ox, whose face it had, that being a creature made use of in plowing,

- (a) Targum Jon. & Hierol. in Gen. iii. 24. (w) De Vita Mosi, l. 3. p. 668. (x) Antiq. l. 3. c. 6. §. 5.
(y) Bereshit Rabba, §. 21. fol. 29. r. & Mattanot Chenuah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. 12. 24. (z) Jarchi & Baal Haturim in loc. (a) Ep. Paulino, tom. 3. fol. 3. F. (b) Ut supra.
(c) R. Samuel Tsartash, Sepher Meker Chayim, fol. 8. 3. (d) Zohar in Gen. fol. 229. 3. & Imre Binah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24. Kimchi Sepher Shorash. in rad. כְּרוּב, & R. Sol. Urbis. Obel Moed, fol. 58. 2. (e) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2. & Succa, fol. 5. 2. (f) T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. (g) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2. Baya Kama, fol. 96. 2.

(r) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1. 2. Jarchi in Deut. xxxi. 26.
(s) Prefat. in Yad Chazaka in principio. (t) Gloss. on T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 2.

ing; and that the face of an ox, and the face of a cherub, is the same, may easily be concluded from *Ezekiel* i. 10. and chap. x. 14. And now because that *Ezekiel's* cherubim had four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle; and the cherubim in the temple were in the same form, as may be gathered from *Ezekiel* xli. 18, 19. those that were placed at the garden of Eden, may be thought to be in the same form also: and some of late have fancied, that they were an hieroglyphic of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, signified by the ox, the lion, and eagle; and of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the face of a man being added to them; to support which notion, it is further observed, that the word כְּרֻבִים should be pronounced *Ce-rubbin*, and interpreted, "as the mighty ones." But it should be known, that the word is also used in the singular number, *Psalms* xviii. 10. *Ezek.* x. 4. and every single cherub had these four faces, so that each of them must be a representation of the Trinity, and of the incarnate Saviour, of which only the word in the singular number can be used: and then it can only be said of it, *cherub*, "as the mighty one;" which observation greatly weakens what is brought to support the fancy: besides, if the cherubim were an emblem of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, they would rather be an emblem of a quaternity, and not of a trinity of persons, since each had four faces, and those distinct from each other; for the face of a man is as much a distinct face as any of the rest. Now the human nature of Christ is no distinct person, much less one in the Godhead; and besides is the inferior nature of Christ, whereas the face of the man, in the cherubim, is superior to the the rest, which are the faces of irrational animals. Moreover, this would give us a similitude of the divine Being, and of that in him which is most incomprehensible by us, the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; and so an answer may be given to such questions, the sense of which suggests, that no answer can be returned to them, *Isaiah* xl. 18, 25. and chap. xlv. 5. and though the second person often appeared in human form, and in the fulness of time became incarnate, and the holy Ghost once descended as a dove, yet the Father's shape was never seen, at any time, *John* v. 37. To which may be added, that this notion seems contrary to the second command, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above*, *Exod.* xx. 4. for allowing that the cherubim at the garden of Eden, were figures made by the Lord himself, it is not credible he should make such, he afterwards forbid others to make; besides, the cherubim in the tabernacle and temple,

were the same figures with those in Eden, as is owned; and these were ordered of God to be made by men, and therefore surely cannot be thought to be figures, emblems, and representations of God himself in his three divine persons; likewise the cherubim are not only distinguished from him, but instead of being figures of him, they are always represented as vehicles on which he sits or rides, *Exodus* xxv. 22. *Psalms* lxxx. 1. and xviii. 10. Once more, it may deserve some little consideration, that the prince of Tyre, a type of antichrist, the man of sin, is called *A cherub*, *Ezekiel* xxviii. 14, 16. which surely cannot be in allusion to the divine being, and the persons in the Godhead, but very well in allusion to angels, the sons of God, as civil magistrates, good and bad, are sometimes called. No doubt there were something signified by the *cherubim* in the tabernacle and temple; but that this should be the mystery of them, is not easy of belief. Philo the Jew makes the cherubim to signify the two powers of God, his creative and governing powers (*b*); and the Jews frequently speak of, רִמָּא דְּכְרֻבִים "the mystery of the cherubim (*i*):" the cherubim over the ark, here spoken of, are sometimes allegorized of the two testaments, the Old and New; the matter of them being of gold, may denote the excellency, purity, simplicity, and duration of them; their number is two, as were the cherubim; and as they were alike, and of one measure and size, this may intend the agreement between them; the doctrines, promises, prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Testament agree with the New; and the account that the one gives of the person, and offices, and grace of Christ, agrees with the other; their situation and position, being placed at the two ends of the mercyseat, and looking towards it, may denote their being full of Christ, from one end to the other, and their pointing at him, and bearing witness to him: here God also reveals himself, as he did between the cherubim; and these are glorious as they were, full of glory, containing the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: though rather the cherubim on the mercyseat, were symbols and representations of angels, since to these the apostle Peter seems to allude, in *1 Pet.* i. 12. their being made of gold may denote their excellency, purity, and simplicity; their being on the mercyseat shews their dependence on Christ, their confirmation by him, and ministration to him; their having wings, expresses their readiness to do his will; and their looking one to another, signifies their unity and concord among themselves; and

(b) De Cherubim, p. 112. de Profugis, p. 465. & de Vita Mosæ, l. 3. p. 669. (i) Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. & 122. 4.

and their looking to the mercyseat, their inspection into the mysteries of grace; and their being over the ark, and God being in the midst of them, declares the presence of God with them, whose face they always behold; and as these cherubim of glory, they are very glorious creatures, and in the glory of them will Christ come a second time.

Shadowing the mercyseat] That is, with their wings, as in *Exodus* xxv. 20. which was typical of Christ; its name agrees with him, "a mercy-seat;" for in him God shews himself merciful to his people; all the stores of mercy are laid up in him; the mission of him into this world is owing to the mercy of God; and the mercy of God was glorified by him in the redemption of his people; and he himself is the way through which they obtain and receive mercy; and he is also a merciful high priest to them: the Hebrew word for the mercyseat *כַּסֵּפֶת* signifies "a covering;" nor is our English word in sound, very different from it; and it was so called, as Kimchi (*k*) observes, because it covered the ark: Christ is a covering to his people; their persons are clothed with his righteousness, and all their sins are covered by it; and they are secured from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come: the Septuagint interpreters render it by *ἡσυχαστήριον*, the word used here by the apostle Paul, in *Rom.* iii. 25. is there rendered *propitiation*, and applied to Christ, who has made reconciliation for sin, and through whom God is propitious to his people. The matter of which the mercyseat was made, was pure gold, denoting the excellency and preciousness of Christ; the make of it, in its length and breadth, was just the same with the ark, in which the two tables were, *Exodus* xxv. 10, 17. Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, and exactly answers to all its requirements; his nature, to the holiness and spirituality of it: his righteousness, to all the obedience it commands; and his sufferings and death to the penalty it enjoins: its situation above the ark, shews that there is no mercy but in a way of righteousness, and that Christ stands between God and the law, and by fulfilling it, covers all the transgressions of it; and being above it, is able to suppress all its accusations and charges: from off the mercyseat God communed with his people; the way to communion with God is by Christ; the encouragement to go to God is from him; and the enjoyment of him is through him: on the day of atonement the mercyseat was sprinkled with blood, typical of the blood of Christ, whereby peace is made, and a way opened into the holiest of all.

Of which we cannot now speak particularly] Not only of the mercyseat, but of all the things before mentioned; for the word *which*, is in the plural number, and refers to all the preceding things; to discourse of which, largely and particularly, required more time than the apostle had, and must have exceeded the bounds of an epistle. The Ethiopic version renders it in the singular number, "of this."

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

Now when these things were thus ordained] Or prepared and got ready; that is, when the tabernacle was finished, and set up, and provided with all its vessels and furniture.

The priests went always into the first tabernacle] The first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, *ῥ. 2.* here the common priests went continually every day, morning and evening; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "the outward tabernacle," in distinction from the innermost part of the tabernacle, or the most holy place.

Accomplishing the service of God] By offering sacrifices, burning incense, and trimming the lamps, which they did every day: the priests entered into the holy place every day for service; but they might not go in at any other time but the time of service (*l*): the phrase, *of God*, is not in the text, but is a supplement; and it was usual with the Jews to call the worship of the temple, and especially that part of it which lay in sacrifices *עֲבֹדָה* "the service:" Simeon the Just used to say, "The world stands upon three things; upon the law *ועל התורה* "and upon the service," and "upon beneficence (*m*);" by *the service*, the commentators (*n*) on the passage understand sacrifices; and again it is said (*o*), No man enters "into the court *לעבודה* "for service," though he is clean, until he has dipped himself: the word here used in the Greek text is in the plural number, and may be rendered *the services*, because there were several sorts of services performed every day, as before observed, and several sacrifices offered; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the offices of sacrifices;" and the Ethiopic version, "their offerings;" and the Arabic version, "offices:" and the service which the high priest performed in the holiest of all once a year, was divers, which is mentioned in the following verses, and

(*l*) *Sepher Shorash. rad. 783*

(*l*) Maimon. *Blath Hamikdash*, c. 2. §. 7, 2. (*m*) *Pirke Abot*, c. 2. §. 2. (*n*) Maimon, & Bartenora in *ib.*
(*o*) *Mishn. Yoma*, c. 3. §. 3.

and is called *service*, *ף*. 8. it is said, that on the day of atonement there were five *רבותות* "services" of the morning daily sacrifice (*p*), in which the high priest ministered in his golden garments: but here the service of the common priests is meant, which was every day; and it becomes such who are employed in sacred service, both to be constant in it, and to do it fully and completely.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year] Though this is not expressed in so many words in *Lev.* xvi. 2. only it is said that *Aaron came not at all times into the holy place within the veil*; yet it is the constant and generally received sense of the Jewish writers, in agreement with the apostle here, that the high priest went into the holy of holies but once a year (*q*), on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month Tisri, and answers to part of September; not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no less than four times (*r*); the first time he went in to offer incense; the second time with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the censer (*s*); and if he entered a fifth time, they say he was worthy of death; wherefore Philo the Jew (*t*) seems to be mistaken when he affirms that, if he went in three or four times on the same day, he suffered death, nor was there any pardon for him; and as it was but one day in a year he might enter, so when he did, no other man, either *Israelite* or priest, might go in along with him; he went in alone without any attendance: the Jews say (*u*), that a cord or thong was bound to the feet of the high priest when he went into the holy of holies, that if he died there, the rest might be able to draw him out; for it was not lawful for another priest to go in, no not an high priest, none besides him on the day of atonement. Pausanias (*w*) makes mention of a temple of Minerva, into which the priests entered once every year; which very likely was observed in imitation of this custom of the Jewish high priest; who in it was a type of Christ, and of his

entrance into heaven, and of his constant and continued intercession there.

Not without blood] For he went in with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat; which was typical of the blood of Christ, by which he entered in once into the holy place, into heaven, when he had obtained eternal redemption by it, *ף*. 12.

Which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people] The bullock was offered by the high priest for himself and his family; and the goat for the sins of the people of Israel, even all their iniquities, transgressions, and sins, *Leviticus* xvi. 11, 15, 16, 21. but Christ, the antitype, having no sin, had no need to offer for himself, chapter vii. 27.

8 The holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

The holy Ghost this signifying] This shews that the holy Ghost existed under the Old Testament; that he is a distinct person in the Godhead, a personal act being here ascribed to him; that he is truly and properly God, the God whose service the priests accomplished in the tabernacle; and by whom Moses was admonished to make all things in it according to the pattern, and by whom the high priest was warned not to come at all times within the veil; moreover, that the Levitical ordinances were of God, and that they had a spiritual signification; that the Old-Testament saints were not without some knowledge of the spiritual meaning of them; and that the holy Ghost was the author of that knowledge; particularly by enjoining the high priest to enter within the veil but once a year, he gave a plain and strong intimation,

That the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing] By which is meant, not only the first part of the tabernacle, as in *ף*. 2, 6. but the whole of it; and not only that, but the temple built in its room, and also the whole Levitical service is included; and the sense is, that while the tabernacle and tabernacle-worship, the temple and temple-service were in being, *the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest*: the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "the way of the saints;" of the priests who ministered in holy things, and were holy to the Lord, and of all the saints that lived before Christ; not that they did not go to heaven, but their way to it was not so manifestly known; life

(p) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 1.

(q) T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 4. & 43. 1. Bab. P'sachim, fol. 86. 1. (r) Bemidbar Rabba. §. 7. fol. 183. 4. Maimon. Bath Hamikdash, c. 2. §. 3. Moses Kotensis Mitzvot Torat, 1^r neg. 303.

(s) Maimon. & Bait-nora in Misna Celim, c. 1. §. 9.

(t) De Legatione ad Caium, p. 1035.

(u) Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Imre B'nai in ib. d.

(w) Arcadia, lib. 1. 8. p. 531.

(x) Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Imre B'nai in ib. d.

(w) Arcadia, lib. 1. 8. p. 531.

life and immortality were not so clearly brought to light, as now by the Gospel; though rather it designs holy places, even heaven itself, which was typified by the holy place within the veil; and may be called the holiest of all, it being the residence of the holy God, holy angels, and holy men, and is sanctified by the presence of Christ for his people, and where perfect holiness will be the glory of it: the way to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, which being imperfect cannot justify, and so not save, though this is the way men naturally seek and take: but Christ is the only way, and he is the plain, pleasant, and safe one: now let it be observed, that heaven was not shut to the Old Testament saints; there was a way into it for them, and they went the same way New Testament saints do; and that way was in some measure known, but it was not fully manifested; it lay hid in obscure prophecies, types, shadows, and sacrifices; hence being more clearly revealed under the Gospel-dispensation, in comparison of its former obscurity, and with respect to the manifestation of it, it is called *a new way*.

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

Which was a figure for the time then present] The tabernacle in general was a figure of Christ's human nature, chapter viii. 2. and the most holy part of it was a figure of heaven itself, *1. 24.* the whole service of it was typical and shadowy; but it was but a temporary figure; it was for that present time only; the things of it were suited to that dispensation, and are now abolished, and ought not to be revived, the ordinances of the Gospel being greatly preferable to them; and whilst it did continue, it was only a parable, as the word here used signifies; it was like a dark saying; it had much obscurity and darkness in it; or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, it was "a figure of the present time;" that is, of the Gospel-dispensation: it was a shadow of good things to come under that; it prefigured what is now accomplished; or rather it was "a figure unto, or until the present time;" till Christ came, when all figures, types, and shadows fled away, and were of no more real use and service.

In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices] That is, in which tabernacle, or at which then present time, or *and* "according to which"

figure or parable, as the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version read, gifts and sacrifices were offered by the priests; see chapters v. 1. and viii. 3.

That could not make him that did the service perfect] Neither the priest that offered them, nor the people whom he represented, and for whom he did the service; they could not make real and perfect expiation for sin, nor justify from it, nor cleanse and sanctify; the spiritual worshippers had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; and their persons were justified by his righteousness, and they were cleansed by his blood: the particular instance in which legal sacrifices did not make perfect,

As pertaining to the conscience] Is, that there is in every man a conscience, and when sin is charged home upon it, that is filled with a sense of divine wrath; nor can it be pacified with any thing short of what will answer the law and justice of God, and which is only done by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

10 Which *stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Which stood only in meats and drinks] That is, along with the gifts and sacrifices offered, there only were meat-offerings and drink-offerings; things which only respect the body, and cannot therefore make perfect, as to the conscience; to which may be added, that while the tabernacle was standing, and the typical service was in being, there was a prohibition of certain meats, as unclean, and an allowance of others, as clean, *Lev. xi. 2—31.* and there were certain drinks which were unlawful to certain persons, at certain times, as to the priests and Nazarites, *Leviticus x. 9. Numb. vi. 3.* and which, for the above reason, could make no man perfect.

And divers washings] Or *baptisms*; the doctrine of which the apostle would not have laid again, chap. vi. 2. these were the washings of the priests, and of the Israelites, and of sacrifices, and of garments, and of vessels, and other things; and which, because they were performed by immersion, they are called *baptisms*: and now since these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, or what was outward, they could not reach the conscience, or make perfect with respect to that.

And carnal ordinances] Which belonged to the flesh, and not the spirit or soul, and therefore could not affect that; besides, these were only

Imposed on them until the time of reformation] They were enjoined the Jews only, though by God himself; and were put upon them as a burden, or a yoke, and which was on some accounts intolerable, but were not to continue any longer than the time of the Gospel, here called *the time of reformation*, or "of correction, and emendation;" in which things that were faulty and deficient are amended and perfected, and in which burdensome rites and ceremonies are removed, and better ordinances introduced: or rather, "of direction;" in which saints are directed to Christ, the sum and substance of all types, shadows, and sacrifices, and in whom alone perfection is.

11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

But Christ being come an high priest] Christ is come, as appears from the cessation of civil government among the Jews, which was not to be till Shiloh came; from the destruction of the second temple, into which the Messiah was to come, and did; from the expiration of Daniel's weeks, at which he was to appear, and be cut off; from the coming of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and from the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling and conversion of them, and the effusion of the Spirit upon them: and he is come an high priest; he was called to be one, and was constituted as such in the council and covenant of peace; and he agreed to do the work of one; he was typified by the high priest under the law; and he came as such into this world, and has done the work of an high priest, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and by his entrance into the holiest of all, with his own blood: and he is come an high priest

Of good things to come] Such as, peace, reconciliation and atonement, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation, which the law was a shadow and figure of; and which under the former dispensation were to come, as to the actual impetration of them by Christ; who is called the high priest of them, to distinguish him from the high priests under the law, who could not bring in these good things, nor make the comers to them and to their offerings perfect; but Christ is the author and administrator of them; and these things are owing to the performance of his priestly office; and such rob Christ of his glory, as a priest, who ascribe these good things to their own merits, or the merits of others: and the way in which he is come is,

By a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building] Meaning the human body of Christ, which was greater than Moses's tabernacle; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, shadow, and type, this being the antitype, the sum and substance of that; and by it things and persons are brought to perfection, which could not be in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help of man: Christ was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the holy Ghost; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a supernatural manner; and so his human body is a tabernacle, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendered, as other human bodies are.

12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Neither by the blood of goats and calves] With which the high priest entered into the holy place within the veil, on the day of atonement, *Lev. xvi. 14, 15.* for Christ was not an high priest of the order of Aaron, nor could the blood of these creatures take away sin, nor would God accept of such sacrifices any longer.

But by his own blood; he entered in once into the holy place] Which shews the truth of his human nature, and the virtue of its blood, as in union with his divine person; by which he opened the way into the holiest of all, as the surety of his people, and gives them boldness and liberty to follow him there; he carried his blood, not in a bason, as the high priest carried the blood of goats and calves, but in his veins; and by it, having been shed by him, he entered not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself; and that not every year, as the high priest, but once for all, having done his work; or as follows,

Having obtained eternal redemption for us] From sin, Satan, the law, and death, to which his people were in bondage, and which he obtained by paying a ransom-price for them; which was not corruptible things, as silver and gold, but his precious blood; in the original text it is, "having found eternal redemption;" there seems to be an allusion to *Jeb xxxiii. 24.* This was what was sought for long ago by the Old Testament saints, who were wishing, waiting, and longing for

for his salvation; it is a thing very precious and difficult to find; it is to be had no where but in Christ; and when found in him, is matter of great joy to sensible sinners; God found it in him, and found him to be a proper person to effect it; and Christ has found it by being the author of it: this is called an *eternal redemption*, because it extends to the saints in all ages, backwards and forwards; it includes eternal life and happiness; and such as are sharers in it shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; it is so called in opposition to the carnal expiations of the high priests, and in distinction from temporal redemptions, deliverances, and salvations. In Talmudic language it would be called פרייה עולמית (x).

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats] Shed either on the day of atonement, or at any other time: the former of these Pausanias (y) relates, was drank by certain priestesses among the Grecians, whereby they were tried whether they spoke truth or no, if not, they were immediately punished; and the latter, he says (z), will dissolve an adamant-stone; but neither of them can purge from sin.

And the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean] The apostle refers to the red heifer, *Numb. xix.* which being burnt, its ashes were gathered up and put into a vessel, and water poured upon them, which was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on unclean persons; the ashes and the water mixed together made the water of separation, or of sprinkling; for so it is called by the Septuagint, *ὑδαρ καταρκτισμῶς*, "the water of sprinkling;" and in the Targum, in a following citation: this was the purification for sin, though it only

Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh] The body, or only in an external and typical way, but did not really sanctify the heart, or purify and cleanse the soul from sin. The Jews say, that "the waters of purification for sin were not waters of purification for sin, without the ashes (a);" and to this the Targumist on *Ezekiel xxxvi. 25.* and on *Zech. xiii. 1.* refers, paraphrasing both texts thus; "I will forgive their sins as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and with the ashes of the heifer, which is a purification for sin."

14 How much more shall the blood of

Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

How much more shall the blood of Christ] Which is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the Son of God; and the argument is, from the lesser to the greater; that if the ashes of the burnt heifer, which was a type of Christ in his sufferings, mixed with water, typically sanctified to the purifying of men externally in a ceremonial way, then much more virtue must there be in the blood of Christ, to cleanse the soul inwardly.

Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God] Christ is a priest, and the sacrifice he has offered up is himself; not his divine nature, but his human nature, soul and body, as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others; and is the reason of its virtue and efficacy, and is expressive of his great love to man: and this sacrifice was offered up to God, against whom his people had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, and which is of a sweet-smelling savour to him; besides, he called him to this work, and engaged him in it, and is well pleased with this offering, as he must needs be, since it is offered up without spot; which expresses the purity of Christ's nature and sacrifice, and the perfection of it, which is such, that no fault can be found in it by the justice of God; and hence, the saints, for whom it is offered, are unblameable and irreproveable. There is an allusion in the clause, both to the priests and to their sacrifices, which were neither of them to have any spot or blemish on them; and this unblemished sacrifice was offered unto God by Christ, *through the eternal spirit*; not the human soul of Christ; for though that is a spirit, yet not eternal, and besides, was a part of the sacrifice; but rather the divine nature of Christ, which is a spirit, and may be so called in distinction from the flesh, or human nature, as it sometimes is, and this is eternal; it was from everlasting, as well as is to everlasting; and this supported him under all his sufferings, and carried him through them, and put virtue into them; and Christ was a priest, in the divine, as well as human nature: though by it may be better understood "the holy Ghost;" and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, and also several copies; since the divine nature rather acts by the human nature, than the human nature by the divine; and Christ is often said to do such and such things by the holy Spirit; and as the holy Ghost formed and filled the human nature of Christ, so he assisted

(x) T. Shebuot, fol. 11. 2.

(y) Achaica, lib. 1. 7. p. 450.

(z) Apcadica, lib. 1. 3. p. 485.

(a) Misn. Temura, c. 1. §. 5.

Maimon, & Bartenora in ibid.

and supported it under sufferings. This whole clause is inserted by way of parenthesis, shewing the efficacy of Christ's blood, and from whence it is: to

Purge your conscience from dead works] That is, "from the works of sin," as the Ethiopic version renders it; which are performed by dead men, separate and alienated from the life of God, are the cause of the death of the soul, and expose to eternal death, and are like dead carcases, nauseous and infectious; and even duties themselves performed without faith and love, are dead works; nor can they procure life, and being depended on, issue in death; and even the works of believers themselves are sometimes performed in a very lifeless manner, and are attended with sin and pollution, and need purging: the allusion is to the pollution by the touch of dead bodies; and there may be some respect to the sacrifices of slain beasts, after the sacrifice and death of Christ, by believing Jews, who were sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and thereby contracted guilt; but immoralities are chiefly designed, and with these the conscience of man is defiled; and nothing short of the blood of Christ can remove the pollution of sin; as that being shed procures atonement, and so purges away the guilt of sin, or makes reconciliation for it, so being sprinkled on the conscience by the Spirit of God, it speaks peace and pardon, and pacifies and purges it, and removes every incumbrance from it: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read, "our conscience." The end and use of such purgation is,

To serve the living God?] So called to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, and in opposition to dead works; and because he has life in himself, essentially and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others; and it is but the reasonable service of his people, to present their souls and bodies as a living sacrifice to him; and who ought to serve him in a lively manner, in faith, and with fervency, and not with a slavish, but a godly filial fear; and one that has his conscience purged by the blood of Christ, and is sensibly impressed with a discovery of pardoning grace, is in the best capacity for such service. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the living and true God."

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament] See the notes on chapters vii. 22. and viii. 6, 8. This may refer both to what goes before, and what follows after; for Christ, that he might offer himself to God, and by his blood purge the consciences of his people from dead works, that so they might serve the living God, became the mediator of the New Testament, or covenant; and also he took upon him this character and office,

That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance] Christ became the mediator of the New Testament, and assumed human nature, that he might die, and by dying might obtain redemption for his people; not only for those that were then in the world, or should be in it, but also for all those that had been in it. *The first Testament* is the first dispensation of the covenant of grace, reaching from the first promulgation of it to Adam after the fall, to the death of Christ; *the transgressions* that were under it are the sins of the saints who lived under that dispensation, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ; and take in all their iniquities of every kind: and the redemption of these, or from these, by Christ, at and through his death, does not suppose that there was no remission of sins, or justification from them under that dispensation; or that the Old Testament saints did not go to heaven, but were detained in a prison till redeemed by the death of Christ; or that their sins were only redeemed, not their persons; for transgressions may stand for transgressors; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that by his death he might be a redemption for them who transgressed the first Testament;" so the Jews say, that the Messiah must die אבות אבות "to redeem the fathers (c):" but the sense is, that though legal sacrifices could not atone for sins, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanse from them; yet the sins of Old Testament saints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they justified and saved, through the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; whose death is a redemption from transgressions past, present, and to come; whose blood is the ransom-price for them, and was shed for the remission of them, even of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; who took the surety's word for the performance of all this, which in the fulness of time he strictly fulfilled, to the satisfaction of law and justice; see Rom. iii. 25. and the ultimate end of Christ's being a mediator, and dying for such purposes, was, that called ones might

(c) R. Moise Hadjarian apud Galatin. l. 8. c. 20.

might receive the promised inheritance: by the *eternal inheritance*, is meant heaven, which is by gift and bequest, belongs to children only, and comes through the death of Christ; and is a very substantial, plentiful, and glorious one; it is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, and as here, *eternal*; it was prepared from the foundation of the world, and will continue for ever; and it may be so called, to distinguish it from the inheritance of the land of Canaan, or any temporal one: *the promise* of this was made before the world began, and was put into the hands of Christ, the surety of the better Testament, by whose death the heirs of it come to enjoy both the promise, and the thing promised; and they are such who are *called*, not merely externally, but internally and effectually; by whom were meant, not Abraham and his natural seed, nor the Old Testament saints only, but all that are called with an holy calling, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who will enjoy both the promise of the inheritance, and that itself, in a way of *receiving*: every word shews this affair to be all of grace; it is an *inheritance*, and therefore the Father's gift; it is by *promise*, and so of grace; and it is *received*, and so freely given, and not merited; and only such who are *called* by grace possess it; and yet it is through the death of Christ, that so it might be received in a way consistent with the justice of God.

16 For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

And where a testament is.] The covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel-dispensation, is a testament or will. The Jews have adopted the Greek word here used into their language, and pronounce it, *וְיָחִיד* and by it understand a dying man's last will and testament (*d*). Some of them make it to be of Hebrew derivation; as if it was said, *דבר זה יחיד* "this shall be to confirm (*e*)," or this shall be stable and firm; though others own it to be the same with this Greek word *διαθήκη* (*f*). The covenant of grace, is properly a covenant to Christ, and a testament or will to his people: it is his, and their Father's will, concerning giving them both grace and glory; it consists of many gifts and legacies; in it Christ is made heir of all things, and his people are made joint-heirs with him; they are given to him as his portion; and they have all things pertaining to life and godliness bequeathed to

them, even all spiritual blessings; the witnesses of it are Father, Son, and Spirit; and the seals of it are the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit; and this is registered in the scriptures by holy men as notaries; and is unalterable and immutable: and this being made,

There must also of necessity be the death of the testator.] Who is Christ; he has various parts in this will or testament; he is the surety and mediator of it; and he is the executor of it; what is given in it, is first given to him, in order to be given to others; all things are put into his hands, and he has a power to give them to as many as the Father has given him; and here he is called the *testator*: Christ, as God, has an equal right to dispose of the inheritance, both of grace and glory; and as Mediator, nothing is given without his consent; and whatever is given, is given with a view to his *death*, and comes through it, and by virtue of it: hence there is a *necessity* of that, and that on the account of the divine perfections; particularly for the declaration of God's righteousness, or by reason of his justice; and also because of his purposes and decrees, which have fixed it, and of his promises, which are yea and amen in Christ, and are ratified by his blood, called therefore the blood of the covenant; and likewise on account of the engagements of Christ to suffer and die; as well as for the accomplishment of scripture-prophecies concerning it; and moreover on account of the blessings which were to come to the saints through it, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation, adoption and eternal life.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

For a testament is of force after men are dead.] The necessity of Christ's death is here urged, from the nature and force of a testament or will among men; which does not take place, and cannot be executed till a man is dead.

Otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth.] No claim can be made by the legatees for the part they have in it, nor can any disposition be made by the executor of it; not that hereby is suggested, that the testament or will of God was uncertain and precarious till the death of Christ, and subject to change and alteration as mens wills are till they die; nor that the inheritance could not be enjoyed by the Old Testament saints; for it is certain; it was entered upon by them before the death of Christ; but the sense is, that there was a necessity of it, that the saints

right

(d) T. Hieros. Peab. fol. 17. 4. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15a. 2.

(e) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 29. 3. Maimoni & Bartenora in Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. §. 3. & in Bava Metzia, c. 2. §. 7. & in Bava Bathra, c. 3. §. 6. (f) Cohen de Lara in David, p. 30.

right unto it, upon the foot of justice, might be evident by it.

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

Whereupon neither the first testament] Or the first administration of the covenant of grace under the law.

Was dedicated without blood] Or *confirmed* without it, that dispensation being a typical one; and that blood was typical of the blood of Christ, by which the new covenant or testament is ratified; see *Exodus* xxiv. 7, 8.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

For when Moses had spoken every precept] Contained in the decalogue, in the book of the covenant, every one of the precepts in *Exodus* xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii, for this is to be understood of the written law, and not of the oral law, the Jews talk of, which they say Moses first delivered by word of mouth to Aaron, then to his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, then to the seventy elders of Israel, and then to the whole congregation; so that Aaron heard it four times, his sons thrice, the seventy elders twice, and all Israel once (g): but this is the written law, which he spoke audibly, and in a known language,

To all the people according to the law] Which God gave him on the mount: this may instruct persons concerned in the public ministry, to speak out plainly and clearly the whole counsel of God, to all to whom they are sent, according to the word of God, which is the rule of faith and practice.

He took the blood of calves and of goats] In the relation of this affair in *Exodus* xxiv. 5. which is referred to, only mention is made of oxen, bullocks, or heifers, here called *calves*, which were sacrificed for peace-offerings, and not of *goats*; though perhaps they may be intended by the burnt-offerings there spoken of, since they were sometimes used for burnt-offerings, *Lev.* i. 10. The Syriac version only reads, "he took the blood of an heifer;" and the Arabic version, "he took the blood of calves;" but all the copies, and other versions, read both.

With water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop] Neither of these are mentioned in *Exodus* xxiv. but since

sprinkling is there said to be used, and blood and water mixed together, and *scarlet* and *hyssop* were used in sprinkling, as in sprinkling the leper, and the unclean house, *Lev.* xiv. 5—7, 49—51. The apostle justly concludes the use of them here; the blood, with water, was typical of the blood and water which sprung from the side of Christ pierced on the cross, the one signifying justification by him, the other sanctification; the *scarlet wool*, which is originally white, but becomes scarlet by being dyed, may denote the native purity of Christ, and his bloody sufferings and death; the *hyssop* may signify his humility, and the purging virtue of his blood, and the sweet-smelling savour of his person, righteousness, and sacrifice. The apostle calls *scarlet*, *scarlet wool*; though whenever the word is used in the Jewish laws of the Old Testament, wool is not expressed, but it is always intended; for it is a rule with the Jews (h); that "The blue, which is spoken of in every place, is wool dyed of a sky colour; purple is wool dyed red, and scarlet is wool dyed in scarlet."

And sprinkled both the book and all the people] In *Exodus* xxiv. 8. no mention is made of the sprinkling of the former, only of the latter, which the apostle either concludes from the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, upon which the book might lie, or from tradition, or from divine revelation: some think it does not necessarily follow from the text, that the book was sprinkled; and repeating the word *לָקַח*, *he took*, read the words, "and he took the book, and sprinkled all the people;" but this seems not natural, but forced; and besides, all the Oriental versions are express for the sprinkling of the book: the book of the law was sprinkled, not because of any impurity in it, but to shew the imperfection of it, and its insufficiency to justify men; or rather the imperfection of man's obedience to it, and to point out what the law requires in case of disobedience, even the blood and life of men; and what it would be, was it not sprinkled with blood, or satisfied by the blood of Christ, namely, an accusing, cursing, and condemning law: the people, all of them, being sprinkled with the blood, were typical of God's peculiar people, even all the elect of God, being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which they are redeemed, and which speaks peace and pardon to them. Some have thought only the seventy elders were sprinkled, as personating the whole congregation; and others, that the twelve pillars were only sprinkled, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel; but Moses and the apostle agree, that they were the people that were sprinkled.

20 Saying,

(g) Maimon. Prefat, ad Yad Chazaka.

(h) Ibid. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. §. 13.

20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

Saying, This is the blood of the testament] The first testament or covenant; this proves what the apostle had asserted in *v. 18.* that it was dedicated with blood, or confirmed by it; compare with this *Matt. xxvi. 28.*

Which God hath enjoined unto you] The people of Israel, to observe, and which they promised to do; see *Exodus xxiv. 7, 8.*

21 Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle] Not at the same time that he sprinkled the book and the people, for then there was no tabernacle; but afterwards, at the time that it was set up, when it was anointed with oil, *Exod. xl. 9.* and though no mention is there made of blood, yet Josephus, in agreement with the apostle, asserts (*i*), that the tabernacle, and its vessels, were not only anointed with oil, but sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the garments of Aaron, and his sons: the tabernacle was typical of the church, in which God dwells, being purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ; and this shews, that there is no coming into the presence of God, the place where he dwells, without blood.

And all the vessels of the ministry] Which were used in the service of the tabernacle: these may denote the vessels of grace and mercy, the elect of God, whose hearts are sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience, and whose garments are washed in it, and made white by it.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood] "All, except a few things," as the Arabic version renders it; for some things were cleansed by water, and others purged by fire, *Numbers xxxi. 23.* Some join the word *almost* with the word *purged*, as if the sense was, that all things were purged by blood, but not perfectly, only almost; but the former sense is best.

And without shedding of blood is no remission] That is, of sin; there was no typical remission without it; and there can be no real remission but by the blood of Christ; no instance can be given of pardon without it; if it could have been otherwise,

the blood of Christ had not been shed; for so it would seem to be shed in vain, and his satisfaction to be unnecessary; nor is it agreeable to the justice of God to forgive sin without satisfaction; nor is it consistent with his veracity and faithfulness to his word, *Gen. ii. 17.* It is a common saying with the Jews, and often to be met with in their writings, אין כפרה אלא בדם "there is no atonement but by blood (*k*);" by the shedding of blood; not by the shedding of it as it flows out of the body of the sacrifice, but as it is poured out on the altar; for the pouring of the blood at the four corners, and at the bottom of the altar, were the chief rites required in sacrifices; nor did they reckon expiation to be expiation, unless the altar was moistened by the blood of the sacrifice (*l*).

23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

It was therefore necessary] On account of the divine appointment, and that the types and antitypes might correspond; and especially it was necessary with respect to the Messiah, the substance and body of all types. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text in *Exodus xl. 9.* "And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and thou shalt anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it; and thou shalt sanctify it, because of the crown of the kingdom of the house of Judah, and the king Messiah, who shall redeem Israel in the latter days." Upon his account it was necessary,

That the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these] That is, that all the people, and the book of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and its vessels, which were types and patterns of persons and things in Gospel-churches, should be purified with blood and water, and with scarlet wool and hyssop.

But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these] The sum and substance of the above patterns, shadows, and examples, such as heaven itself; which though not impure in itself, yet some think it may be said to be purified, because saints are made meet for it by being purged with the blood of Christ; others observe, that sin reaches to heaven, and provokes God that dwells there; hence atonement for it may be called a purification

(i) Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. §. 6.

(k) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 5. 1. Zebachim, fol. 6. 1. & Menachot, fol. 93. 2. (l) Reland, Heb. Antiq. par. 3. c. 2. §. 2.

purification of heaven; but rather this may be said of it, inasmuch as by the blood of Christ an entrance and preparation is made for the saints into it. Likewise the human nature of Christ is among these heavenly things; not that it is heavenly, as to the matter and substance of it, but may be so called, because of its wonderful formation; and which has been purified, not from any real internal pollution that was in it, but from what was imputed to it, the sin of his people. Also the whole church, triumphant and militant, may be intended by *heavenly things*: the Old Testament saints went to heaven before Christ came; and though they were not impure, but were the spirits of just men made perfect, yet their iniquities were purged by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, after they were gone to heaven; see *1. 15.* and *Rom. iii. 25.* The church militant, or believers on earth, may be said to be *heavenly*, since they are partakers of an heavenly birth and calling; their Head is in heaven, and their conversation is there; and they have a right unto it, and are making meet for it; and they are in themselves defiled with sin, and are purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the offering up of his body once for all: to which may be added, that spiritual blessings are *heavenly things*; they are from heaven, and saints are blessed with them in heavenly places; and these come to them thro' the blood and sacrifice of Christ; yea, the Gospel, which is from heaven, and the doctrines of it, are sealed and confirmed by the blood of Christ: his sacrifice is expressed in the plural number; not that there has been a repetition of it, for it is but one sacrifice, and but once offered up, and will never be reiterated; but to shew the excellency of it, it being usual with the Jews to use the plural number in speaking of things the most excellent; so Christ is called Wisdoms, *Prov. i. 20.* besides, respect may be had to the many sacrifices under the law, which were types of it, and were answered and fulfilled by it; and to the many persons on whose account it was offered; and to the parts of it, the soul and body of Christ: and this is a *better* sacrifice than the legal ones, in its own nature, and in its use and efficacy to take away sin, and make perfect, which they could not.

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands] The most holy place in the taber-

nacle of Moses, or in the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt by Zorobabel, and repaired by Herod,

Which are the figures of the true] That is, the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, was a figure of heaven, the truth of that type; see *1. 9.* as follows. Josephus (*m*) suggests the same, when speaking of the most holy place, he says, that it was inaccessible to the priests, that it might be as heaven to God.

But into heaven itself] Not the visible heavens, the airy and starry ones through which he passed, but the third heaven, the habitation of God, angels, and glorified saints: this shews that heaven is a place; that Christ, as man, was out of it when on earth; and that at his ascension he entered into it, having done the work he came about, and that with acceptance: the end of his entrance was

Now to appear in the presence of God for us] Christ, as God, was always in his presence, from everlasting; as Mediator, he was with him in the council of peace; while he was here on earth his Father was with him, he was not alone; but now in his human nature he is at his right hand, where he appears before him, as a favourite before his prince, on the behalf of another, or as an advocate on the behalf of his client: Christ appears in the court of heaven for his elect, by representing their persons; by presenting himself, his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness before God on their account; by introducing them into the presence of God, and offering up their prayers with the incense of his mediation; by presenting them to himself, and to his Father, and obtaining every blessing for them. And this he does *now*, since his entrance; not that he did not appear before God for the saints of the Old Testament, for he was the angel of God's presence then, though he did not appear then in the manner he does now, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as if it had been slain; but it denotes the continuance and perpetuity of his appearance for his people; he is ever interceding for them.

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Nor yet that he should offer himself often] Or at all again; which shews the perfection of his sacrifice, for justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, sin done away, and compleat salvation obtained at once; which lies against the error of the Socinians, who say, he offers himself now in heaven; and

of

(m) Antiq. l. 3. c. 3. §. 4. & c. 7. §. 3.

of the Papists, who pretend to offer the body of Christ daily.

As the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others] Not his own, nor other mens, but the blood of goats and calves; but Christ entered into heaven with his own blood, he having been altar, priest, and sacrifice: the high priest went into the most holy place every year, but Christ has entered into heaven once for all, where he sits down and continues, having done his work effectually.

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world] For if it was necessary that he should often offer up himself now, which is the same as to suffer, since the sacrifice of himself, the same was necessary before; seeing sin was in the world from the beginning, and the saints from the foundation of the world had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; but the truth is, Christ's sufferings were but once, though the virtue of them is always, both before and after; nor can he suffer more, or again, because of his power over death and the grave, and because he has effectually obtained what he suffered for.

But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself] This is to be understood, not of his appearance in heaven, of which mention is made in *ψ. 24.* but of his incarnation on earth, called an *appearance*; not as though his human nature was a mere phantom or apparition, for it was a real thing; or as if he was then manifested to be what he really was before; for before his incarnation he was not truly and actually man; but this is said with respect to the manifestation of his invisible Deity; or of him as the Son of God in human nature; and in regard to the types of the old law, under which he was hid; and with respect to the prophecies of his coming; and it designs the same thing with his descent from heaven, and coming into this world, in which *he appeared* in fashion as a man, as a mean man, as an afflicted one; yea, he looked like a sinful man, bearing the infirmities and sins of his people; his appearance was but to a very few, and for a little time; and the time of it was, *in the end of the world*; the same with the last days; the last age of the world; the end of the Jewish economy; at the close of their civil and ecclesiastical state, according to

Hab. ii. 3. so the Jews expect their Messiah, *משיח* "at the end of days (*n*):" and this appearance was but *once*; there were many appearances of him in an human form, under the Old Testament-dispensation; and there were many after his resurrection; but this is said to be but once, in opposition to the many types and sacrifices under the law, and agrees with his one oblation, and once suffering: the end of his appearance was, *to put away sin*; the filth of it, by his blood; the guilt of it, by his atoning sacrifice; and the punishment of it, by his sufferings and death, the penalty of the law; and in consequence of all this, the dominion of it by the power of his grace, and the very being of it hereafter: and this putting it away is signified by his bearing, carrying, and taking it away; by removing it as far as the east is from the west; by finishing and making an end of it; by crucifying the old man, destroying the body of sin, and by an utter disannulling and abolishing it, as a debt, and as a law; and all this is done by the sacrifice of himself; by the offering up of his body and soul, an offering for sin; as in *ψ. 14.*

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die] Not a moral, or what is commonly called a spiritual death, nor an eternal one, but a corporal one; which does not arise from the constitution of nature, but from the sin of man, and God's decree on account of it; by which it is fixed that men shall die, and how long they shall live, and when they shall die; so that they cannot die sooner nor later; all things antecedent to death, which lead on to it, and issue in it, are appointed by God, and so is death itself, with all its circumstances; mens days can neither be lengthened nor shortened, either by Christ himself, or others: and this statute and appointment of God concerns men, not angels; and reaches to all men, wicked and righteous; and though there have been some few exceptions, as Enoch and Elijah; and all will not sleep, or die, some will be found alive at Christ's appearing; yet such will undergo a change which is equivalent to death, as Enoch and Elijah have done: and generally speaking men die but once; it is not usual for men to die, and live again, and then die again; there have been some extraordinary instances of this kind, but they are rare; it is the statute-law of heaven in commorr for men to die, and that but once;

so Cicero (e) the heathen says, *omnibus definitam esse mortem*: Christ died once, he will die no more; and it is the comfort of the saints, that though they die the first death, they shall not be hurt of the second death; and the consideration of this decree should excite to diligence and industry: death is certain to God, but uncertain to us, as to the time, nor should we curiously inquire into it, but patiently wait for it, and quietly submit unto it.

But after this the judgment] The last and general judgment, which will reach to all men, quick and dead, righteous and wicked, and in which Christ will be judge. There is a particular judgment which is immediately after death; by virtue of which, the souls of men are adjudged to their proper state of happiness or woe; and there is an universal judgment, which will be after the resurrection of the dead, and is called *eternal judgment*, and to come; this is appointed by God, though the time when is unknown to men; yet nothing is more certain, and it will be a righteous one.

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many] As man dies but once, Christ was offered but once, or he suffered and died but once; and that was not on his own account, or for his own sins, but to bear the sins of many; not of angels but of men, and these not a few, but many; which is said to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and to encourage souls to hope in him: hence many are brought to believe in him, and many are justified by him, have their sins forgiven them, and are glorified; though Christ bore not the sins of all men; for as all men have not faith, all are not justified, pardoned, and saved: what he bore were sins; all kind of sin, every act of sin, and all that belongs to it; its filth, guilt, and punishment, even the iniquity of all his people; which must be a prodigious weight, and than which nothing could be more nauseous: his bearing them supposes they were upon him, though not in him, imputed, though not inherent; that he did not sink under them; that he made an entire satisfaction for them, and bore them wholly away, both from the persons of his people, and from the sight of justice. The way in which he came to bear them, was this; he became a surety for all the elect; his Father imputed to him all their sins,

and he voluntarily took them upon himself; where justice found them, and demanded satisfaction of him for them, and he gave it; which is an instance both of his great love, and of his great strength.

And unto them that look for him] With affection, faith, and patience.

Shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation] This is to be understood of Christ's visible and personal appearance on earth, which will be a glorious one, he will appear in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, and in the glory of his power, to the joy of saints, and to the terror of the wicked; for every eye shall see him: and this is said to be the second time; that is, that he appears on earth, and personally; for though he often appears to his people, it is in a spiritual way; and though he appeared to Stephen and to Paul, yet not on earth, but in heaven; and this is called the second time, with reference to his first appearance in human nature at his incarnation, and after that he ascended to heaven; and as this will be the second, it will be the last: the manner in which he will appear, will be, *without sin*; without sin itself; without any thing like it; without any infirmities; which, though not sinful, are the effects of sin; without sin imputed to him, with which he appeared before; without being a sacrifice for sin; and without sin upon his people that come with him, or he shall meet, whom he shall raise, or change, and take to himself: and the end of his appearance with respect to them, will be *unto salvation*; the end of his first appearance was to obtain salvation for his people, and he has obtained it, and there is a comfortable application of it made unto them by the Spirit of God; but the full possession of it will be hereafter, and into this will Christ put them, when he shall appear: the Alexandrian copy adds, "by faith," and also some other copies.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter the apostle pursues his argument, shewing the weakness and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the superior excellency of Christ's, which he closes with suitable exhortations to faith on Christ, as the alone high priest, and to a constant profession of him. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood is proved, from the law by which it was established, being only a shadow of good things to come; from the insufficiency of annual sacrifices to perfect the comers to them, or to purge the consciences of the worshippers from sin; and from the non-cessation of these sacrifices which would

(e) Pro Sextio.

would have been, if the above ends could have been answered by them, *ſ. 1, 2.* but on the contrary, by the annual return of theſe ſacrifices, ſins are afreſh remembered, and very good reaſon there is for it, ſince it is an impoſſible thing that the blood of ſlain beaſts ſhould take away ſin, *ſ. 3, 4.* moreover, the apoſtle proves the inſufficiency of ſuch ſacrifices, by a divine teſtimony, out of *Pſalm xl. 6—8.* by which it appears, that they are not agreeable to the will of God, and are rejected by him as uſeleſs, *ſ. 5—8.* And this leads the apoſtle to diſcourſe of the excellency of Chriſt's ſacrifice above them; that they are taken away, and his is ſubſtituted in their room; that as they are not agreeable to the will of God, his is a fulfilment of it; that though they could not expiate ſin, yet by the offering up of the body of Chriſt once for all, his people are ſanctified, or their ſins are expiated, *ſ. 9, 10.* and this is further illuſtrated by a comparison between the prieſts under the law, and Chriſt; they were many, he but one; they daily offered the ſame ſacrifices, he offered but one ſacrifice; theirs could not take away ſin, by his offering he has perfectly expiated the ſins of his people; they ſtood daily miniſtering, their work being never at an end; he is ſet down at the right hand of God, expecting his enemies to be made his footſtool, having done his work to perfection, *ſ. 11—14.* and that legal ſacrifices are ceaſed, and no more to be uſed, is proved by a teſtimony of the holy Ghoſt, out of *Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.* relating to the covenant of grace, among the promiſes of which, ſtands that of the forgiveness of ſin; from whence the apoſtle juſtly concludes, that where remiſſion of ſin is, there is, and there needs no more offering for it, *ſ. 15—18.* and from hence the apoſtle paſſes to exhortations to the exerciſe of grace, and diſcharge of duty; which he ſtrongly urges, from the conſideration of Chriſt's prieſthood, and the efficacy of it: and firſt, he preſſes them to the duty of prayer, to draw nigh to God, to the throne of his grace. The manner in which he would have them approach to God, is in the ſincerity of their hearts, in a plerophory of faith, an high and full exerciſe of it, and in purity of ſoul and body: the motives or encouragements to it, are taken from their having boldneſs and liberty to enter by faith into heaven itſelf with their prayers, through the blood of Jeſus; from there being a new and living way opened for them through the fleſh of Chriſt; and from their having ſuch an high prieſt over the houſe of God, as he is, *ſ. 19—22.* And

next he exhorts them to a conſtant and ſtedfaſt profeſſion of their faith, to which he animates them by the faithfulneſs of a promiſing God, who will never leave nor forſake his people, *ſ. 23.* And then to conſider one another in their church relation, and to ſtir up one another to the exerciſe of the grace of love, and to the performance of good works, *ſ. 24.* and alſo not to forſake their public aſſemblies, as was the cuſtom of ſome; but to exhort each other to greater diligence in attending there, eſpecially ſince they might obſerve that a time of great tribulation was at hand, *ſ. 25.* and in order to deter from apoſtaſy, which is expreſſed by a ſinning wilfully, after a man has received and profeſſed the knowledge of the truth, the apoſtle obſerves that the deſtruction of ſuch is inevitable; ſince there never will be another propitiatory ſacrifice offered up, and therefore there can be no other than a dreadful expectation of an awful judgment, and of the wrath of God, which, like a conſuming fire, will deſtroy ſuch adverſaries of Chriſt, *ſ. 26, 27.* the juſtice of which is argued from the leſs to the greater; that if the tranſgreſſors of the law of Moſes had no mercy ſhewn them, but died when there were proper and ſufficient witneſſes of their crimes, then ſuch muſt be deſerving of a far greater puniſhment, who treat with the greateſt rudeneſs the perſon of the Son of God, and his precious blood, and with the greateſt contempt the perſon and grace of the holy Spirit, *ſ. 28, 29.* and ſuch perſons have reaſon to expect the vengeance of God will fall on them, ſince it is threatened them in the word of God, *Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.* and a dreadful thing it is to fall into his hand, *ſ. 30, 31.* But in order to encourage theſe believing Hebrews to hold on and out unto the end, the apoſtle puts them in mind of their good beginning, how well they ſet out, and how bravely they behaved, by bearing afflictions and reproaches themſelves; by being the companions of thoſe that were afflicted and reproached; by having compaſſion on the apoſtle when in bonds; and by chearfully ſuffering the loſs of their goods upon this conſideration, that they had in heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance, *ſ. 32—34.* wherefore it would be exceeding wrong and very unbecoming, after all this, to drop their faith and a profeſſion of it, which otherwiſe would iſſue in the enjoyment of the great recompence of reward, *ſ. 35.* and as patience is neceſſary, it is right to exerciſe it under ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake, partly becauſe it is doing the will of God, and partly becauſe

that after that is done, such shall receive the promised happiness; and what may serve the more to engage to the exercise of it is, it is but a little while and Christ will come and put an end to all the sufferings of his people, *ψ*. 36, 37. and that faith should be in exercise, is proved from a divine testimony, *Hab.* ii. 4. and so must be pleasing to God, when the contrary is highly resented by him, *ψ*. 38. And now, lest the believing Hebrews should conclude from all this that the apostle suspected them as going into apostasy, he declares his belief, that he and they were not in the number of apostates, but of believers, whose souls would he saved, *ψ*. 39.

FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come] By which is meant not the moral law, for that is not a shadow of future blessings, but a system of precepts; the things it commands are not figuratively, but really good and honest; and are not obscure, but plain and easy to be understood; nor are they fleeting and passing away, as a shadow; but lasting and durable: but the ceremonial law is intended; this was a shadow, a figure, a representation of something true, real, and substantial; was dark and obscure, yet had in it, and gave some glimmering light; and was, like a shadow, fleeting and transitory: and it was a shadow of good things; of Christ himself, who is the body, the sum and substance of it, and of the good things to come by him; as the expiation of sin, peace, and reconciliation, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and eternal life; these are said to be to come, as they were under the former dispensation, whilst the ceremonial law was in force, and that shadow was in being, and the substance not as yet.

And not the very image of the things] As it had not, neither the things themselves, nor Christ the substance of them, so it did not give a clear revelation of them, as is made in the Gospel, nor exhibit a distinct delineation of them, such as an image expresses; it only gave some short and dark hints of future good things, but did not exactly describe them: and therefore

Can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually] Namely, the sacrifices of bullocks and goats, which were offered on the day of atonement, year after year, in successive

generations, from the first appointment of that day, to the writing of this epistle: sacrifices of such a kind, and so often repeated, could never

Make the comers thereunto perfect] Either the people that came to the temple, and brought the sacrifices to the priests to offer them for them, or the priests that offered them; so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "perfect them that offer;" and if not one, then not the other: legal sacrifices could not make a perfect expiation for sin; there is no proportion between them and sin; nor did they extend to all sin, and at most only typically expiated; nor could they justify and cleanse from sin. Contrary to this the Jews (*ψ*) say, "When Israel was in the holy land, there was no iniquity found in them, for the sacrifices which they offered every day atoned for them." But spiritual sacrificers and worshippers were expiated, justified, and cleansed another way, even by the blood of Christ, slain from the foundation of the world in purpose, promise, and type, and to which their faith had respect in every sacrifice.

2 For then, would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered] The Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, leave out the word *not*; and the sense requires it should be omitted; for the meaning is, that if perfection had been by the legal sacrifices, they would have ceased to have been offered; for if the former ones had made perfect, there would have been no need of others, or of the repetition of the same; but because they did not make perfect, therefore they were yearly renewed; unless the words are read with an interrogation, as they are in the Arabic version, "for then would they not have ceased to be offered?" Yes, they would; they are indeed ceased now, but this is owing to Christ and his sacrifice, and not to the efficacy of these sacrifices; for yearly sacrifices were offered for former sins, as well as for fresh ones, as appears from the following clause.

Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins] There are external and internal worshippers; the latter are such who worship God in spirit and in truth: but here ceremonial worshippers are meant, who, if they had been really purged from sin by legal sacrifices and purifications, would have had no more

more conscience of sins, and so have had no need to have repeated them; as such spiritual worshippers, who are once purged from sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; not that they have no sin, or no sense of sin, or that their consciences are seared, or that they never accuse for sin, or that they are to make no confession and acknowledgment of sin; but that they are discharged from the guilt of sin, and are not liable to condemnation for it; and through the application of the blood of Christ to them, have peace with God, and joy in the holy Ghost.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

But in those sacrifices] The Arabic version reads, "but in it;" that is, in the law; but the Syriac version reads and supplies as we do, בהון ברכות "in those sacrifices," which were offered every year on the day of atonement.

There is a remembrance again made of sins every year] Of all the sins that were committed the year past, and even of those that were expiated typically by the daily sacrifice, and others that had been offered; which proves the imperfection and insufficiency of such sacrifices: there was a remembrance of sins by God, before whom the goats were presented, their blood was sprinkled, and the people cleansed, *Lev. xvi. 7, 14, 15, 30.* and there was a remembrance of them by the people, who, on that day, afflicted their souls for them, *ψ. 29, 31.* and there was a remembrance of them by the high priest, who confessed them over, and put them upon the head of the goat, *ψ. 21.* by which it was owned, that these sins were committed; that they deserved death, the curse of the law; that the expiation of them was undertaken by another, typified by the goat; that this was not yet done, and therefore there was no remission, but a typical one, by these sacrifices; but that the sins remained, and required a more perfect sacrifice, which was yet to be offered up. Legal sacrifices were so far from inducing an oblivion of sins, that they themselves brought them to remembrance, and were so many acknowledgments of them. Though Philo the Jew thinks the contrary, and gives this as a reason why the heart and brain were not offered in sacrifice, because "it would be foolish, that the sacrifices should cause, not a forgetfulness of sins, but a remembrance of them (9)."

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

For it is not possible] There is a necessity of

sin being taken away, otherwise it will be remembered; and there will be a conscience of it, and it must be answered for, or it will remain marked, and the curse and penalty of the law must take place, but it is impossible

That the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins] Which was shed on the day of atonement: sin is a breach of the moral law, but these sacrifices belong to the ceremonial law, which are less acceptable to God than moral duties: sin is committed against God, and has an objective infiniteness in it, and therefore can never be atoned for by the blood of such creatures; it leaves a stain on the mind and conscience, which this blood cannot reach; besides, this is not the same blood, nor of the same kind with the person that has sinned; yea, if this could take away sin, it would do more than the blood of the man himself could do; such blood shed can never answer the penalty of the law, satisfy divine justice, or secure the honour of divine holiness: but what the blood of these creatures could not do, the blood of Christ has done, and does; that takes away sin from the sight of justice, and from the consciences of the saints. Compare with this the Septuagint version of *Jer. xi. 15.* "What, has the beloved committed abomination in my house? Shall prayers, and the holy flesh take away thy wickednesses from thee, or by these shalt thou escape?"

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith] In *Psalms xl. 7, 8.* This was said by David, not of himself, and his own times; for sacrifice and offering were desired and required in his times; nor was he able to do the will of God, so as to fulfil the law, and make void legal sacrifices; nor did he engage as a surety to do this; nor was it written of him in the volume of the book that he should; besides, he speaks of One that was not yet come, though ready to come, when the fullness of time should be up; and who is here spoken of as coming into the world, and who is no other than Jesus Christ; and this is to be understood, not of his coming into Judea, or the temple at Jerusalem; or out of a private, into a public life; nor of his entrance into the world to come, into heaven, into life eternal, as the Targum on *Psalms xl. 7.* paraphrases it, after he had done his work on earth, for the other world is never expressed by the world only; nor did Christ go into that to do the will of God, but to sit down there, after he had done it; besides, Christ's entrance into heaven

(9) De Victimis, p. 341.

heaven was a going out of the world, and not into it. To which may be added; that this phrase always signifies coming into this terrene world, and intends mens coming into it at their birth; see *John* i. 9. and the note there; and must be understood of Christ's incarnation, which was an instance of great love, condescension, and grace; and the reason of it was to do what the law, and the blood of bulls and goats could not do. For it follows,

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not] Or didst not desire and delight in, as the word *רָצוֹן* used in *Psalms* xl. 7. signifies; meaning, not the sacrifices of wicked men, or such as were offered up without faith in Christ; but the ceremonial sacrifices God himself had instituted, and which were offered in the best manner; and that not merely in a comparative sense, as in *Hosea* vi. 6. *1 Samuel* xv. 22. but the meaning is, that God would not have these continue any longer, they being only imposed for a time, and this time being come; nor would he accept of them as terms, conditions, and causes of righteousness, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but he willed that his Son should offer himself an offering, and a sacrifice for a sweet-smelling savour to him.

But a body has thou prepared me] Or "fitted for me;" a real natural body, which stands for the whole human nature; and is carefully expressed, to shew that the human nature is not a person. This was prepared in the book of God's purposes and decrees, and in the council and covenant of grace; and was curiously formed by the holy Ghost in time, for the second person, the Son of God, to clothe himself with, as the Syriac version renders it, "thou hast clothed me with a body;" and that he might dwell in, and in it do the will of God, and perform the work of man's redemption: in *Psalms* xl. 7. it is, *Mine ears thou hast opened*, digged or bored; the ear being put for the whole body; for if he had not had a body prepared, he could not have had ears opened: besides, the phrase is expressive of Christ's assuming the form of a servant, which was done by his being found in fashion as a man, *Phil.* ii. 7. and of his being a voluntary servant, and of his chearful obedience as such, the opening, or boring of the ear was a sign, *Exodus* xxi. 5, 6. And thus by having a true body prepared for him, and a willing mind to offer it up, he became fit for sacrifice.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin] Which

were the principal kinds of offerings under the law.

Thou hast had no pleasure] Not only in comparison of moral duties, or spiritual sacrifices, such as those of praise and thanksgiving, *Psalms* lxi. 30, 31. but so as to accept of the offerers for the sake of them, and smell a sweet savour in them; for these could not satisfy his justice, appease his anger, or expiate sin; and when they were in full force, and offered in the most agreeable manner, they were no otherwise well-pleasing to God, than as they were types of, and had respect unto the sacrifice of his Son. In the Hebrew text it is, "thou didst not require, or ask for;" for them, when the time was up that Christ should come into the world.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

Then said I, Lo, I come] Christ, observing that legal sacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for him; and that it was written of him in the book of God, that he should come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, he chearfully expresses his readiness to come, immediately, without any compulsion, even he himself, and not another.

(*In the volume of the book it is written of me*)] In the book of the law, as the Targum, and Kimchi on *Psalms* xl. 8. interpret it; and which may design the Bible in general, the whole book of the scriptures of the Old Testament: so *סֵפֶר* "the book," is used for the whole Bible (*r*); and it is said (*s*), all the whole law, that is, all scripture is called *סֵפֶר* "a volume;" accordingly there are things written of Christ in all the writings of the Old Testament, in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms. Jarchi interprets it of the law of Moses; and so it may design the pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; and there are several places therein, in which it is written of Christ, and particularly in Genesis, the first of these books, and in the head, the beginning, the frontispiece, the first part of that book; namely, chap. iii. 15. which may be principally designed. Books were formerly written in rolls of parchment, and hence called *volumes*; see the notes on *Luke* iv. 17, 20. The end of his coming is next expressed by him,

To

(*r*) T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 73. 4.
fol. 60. 1.

(*s*) T. Bab. Gittin,

To do thy will, O God] Which, when he came, he set about with the utmost delight, diligence, and faithfulness, in preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in finishing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of his Father's will he came to do; and which he did, by fulfilling the law in its precept and penalty; by offering himself a sacrifice to God; by suffering death, the death of the cross; by destroying all his and our enemies, and so working out everlasting salvation.

8 Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Above, when he said] In the aforesaid place, Psalm xl. 7, 8.

Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein] This is a recapitulation of what is before said; and all kind of sacrifices are mentioned, to shew that they are all imperfect and insufficient, and are abolished; and the abrogation of them is expressed in the strongest terms, as that God would not have them, and that he took no pleasure in them:

Which are offered by the law] According as that directs and enjoins: this clause is added, to distinguish these sacrifices from spiritual ones, under the Gospel-dispensation, and which are well-pleasing to God; and to prevent an objection against the abolition of them, taken from hence, that they are according to the law; and yet notwithstanding this, God will not have them, nor accept of them.

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God] See the note on v. 7.

He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second] The sense is, either that God has taken away, and abolished the law, that he might establish the Gospel; or he has caused the first covenant to vanish away, that place might be found for the second, or new covenant; or he has changed and abrogated the priesthood of Aaron, that he might confirm the unchangeable priesthood of Christ; or rather, he has taken away that which was first spoken of in the above citation, namely, sacrifice, offering, burnt-offerings, and

sin-offerings; these he has removed, and rejected as insignificant and useless, that he might establish what is mentioned in the second place; namely, the will of God, which is no other than the sacrifice of Christ offered up according to the will of God, and by which his will is done.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

By the which will we are sanctified] That is, by the sacrifice of Christ, which was willingly offered up by himself, and was according to the will of God; it was his will of purpose that Christ should be crucified and slain; and it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his people; and it was grateful and well-pleasing to him, that his soul should be made an offering for sin; and that for this reason, because hereby the people of God are sanctified, their sins are perfectly expiated, the full pardon of them is procured, their persons are completely justified from sin, and their consciences purged from it: even

Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all] This is said, not to the exclusion of his soul; it designs his whole human nature, and that as in union with his divine person; and is particularly mentioned, in allusion to the legal sacrifices, the bodies of slain beasts, which were types of him, and with a reference to his Father's preparation of a body for him, for this purpose, v. 5. Moreover, his obedience to his Father's will was chiefly seen in his body; this was offered upon the cross; and his blood, which atones for sin, and cleanses from it, was shed out of it; and this oblation was once for all; which gives it the preference to Levitical sacrifices; destroys the Socinian notion of Christ's continual offering himself in heaven; and confutes the error of the Popish mass, or of the offering of Christ's body in it.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

And every priest standeth daily ministering] The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "every high priest;" who might minister daily, if he would; but since the daily sacrifice was generally offered by the common priests, these are rather designed. The apostle passes from the anniversary sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement, having shewn the insufficiency and imperfection of them, to the lambs

lambs of the daily sacrifice which were offered morning and evening, and whatsoever else might be daily offered on other accounts; and which he also shews, are equally ineffectual to take away sin; almost every word he uses shews the imperfection of the priesthood of Aaron, and serves to illustrate the priesthood of Christ. When he says *every priest*, it supposes there were more than one, as indeed there were many, not only in succession to one another, but together, having different parts of service to perform; and every one of them *standeth* at the altar, shewing that his work was not done; and the present tense is used, because sacrifice in fact had not ceased at the writing of this epistle, though of right it ought to have done; and he stood *daily ministering*; every day, and sometimes often in a day, and always morning and night, *Exodus* xxix. 38, 39. The priest always stood to minister, *Deut.* xviii. 5. Hence the Jews say (t), "there is no ministration" or service, *אין מינוחה* "but standing;" and "perhaps some reference may be had to *מנוחה* "the stations (u)," or stationary men," who were always upon the spot at Jerusalem, to offer for such as were at a distance.

And offering oftentimes the same sacrifices] As a lamb in the morning, and another at evening; and if it was a burnt-offering, or a sin-offering, or an offering for the purification of a woman, or for the cleansing of a leper, they were always the same: and this frequent offering, and the offering of the same things, shew, that they were such

Which can never take away sins] For notwithstanding these many and repeated offerings, even the sins of Old Testament saints remained to be atoned for by Christ; see *Romans* iii. 25. *Hebrews* ix. 15.

12 But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

But this man] Jesus Christ, for he is a man, though not a mere man; or this great high priest, who came to do the will of God, and whose body was offered once for all.

After he had offered one sacrifice for sins] The sacrifice of himself, body and soul, and this but once.

For ever sat down on the right hand of God] As having done his work effectually, and that with acceptance; and therefore is placed as a token of honour at the right hand of God, where he sits enjoying rest, ease, and pleasure, and that for

ever: all which is opposed to the priests under the law; they were many, he but one; they offered many sacrifices, he but one; they offered theirs often, every day, he but once; they *stood* ministering, he *sat* down; his sacrifice being effectual to take away sin, when theirs was not.

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

From henceforth expecting] According to God's promise and declaration to him, *Psalms* cx. 1.

Till his enemies be made his footstool] See the note on chapter i. 13.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

For by one offering] The same as before; of himself, body and soul; this is a reason why he is set down, and will continue so for ever; and why he expects his enemies to be made his footstool; because, by one sacrifice for sin, which he has once offered,

He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified] That is, who are sanctified by God the Father, *Jude* 1. or, who are set apart by him in eternal election from the rest of the world, for his own use, service, and glory, to a state of grace and holiness here, and happiness hereafter; for this is not to be understood either of their being sanctified in Christ, though the Syriac version reads, "that are sanctified in him, or by his Spirit," though both are true of the same persons; these Christ, by his sacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their sins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their sins, and compleat redemption; he has perfectly justified them from all things, and that for ever; which shews the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fulness and duration of their salvation; and so Christ by his one sacrifice did, what the law and all its sacrifices could not do, *Y. 1.*

15 Whereof the holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

Whereof the holy Ghost also is a witness to us] In *Jer.* xxxi. 33, 34. This preface to the following citation shews, that the books of the Old Testament are of divine original and authority; that the penmen of them were inspired by the holy Ghost; that he existed in the times of the Old Testament; that he is truly and properly God the Lord, or *Jehovah*, that speaks in the following

(t) Jarchi in *Deut.* xviii. 5. Maimon. *Biath Hamikdash*, c. 5. §. 16.

(u) *Misn. Taanith*, c. 4. §. 2.

ing verses; and that he is a distinct divine person, and the author of the covenant of grace; and in what he says in that covenant, he bears testimony to the truths before delivered concerning the insufficiency and abolition of legal sacrifices, and of full and perfect remission of sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

For after that he had said before] What is expressed in the following verse.

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

See the note on chapter viii. 10.

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

See the note on chapter viii. 12. The words are cited to a different purpose here than there; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to observe God's promise of non-remembrance of sin; which is no other than remission of sin; and which is not consistent with legal sacrifices, in which there is a remembrance of sin every year, *ŷ. 3.* and consequently, since this new covenant has taken place, legal sacrifices must be abolished, as the apostle argues in the next verse. In one of Beza's copies are inserted, at the beginning of this verse, these words, "then he said;" which seem necessary to answer to the last clause of *ŷ. 15.*

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Now where remission of these is] That is, of these sins; and that there is remission of them, is evident from this promise of the covenant, just now produced; from God's gracious proclamation of it; from the shedding of Christ's blood for it; from his exaltation at the Father's right hand to give it; from the Gospel declaration of it; and from the several instances of persons favoured with it.

There is no more offering for sin] There may be other offerings, as of praise and thanksgiving, but none for sin; "there is no need," as the Syriac version; or "there is not required," as the Arabic version; there is no need of the reiteration of Christ's sacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more; nor of the repetition of legal sacrifices, nor ought they to continue any longer. The Jews themselves say (*x*), "When the king Messiah, the son of David, shall reign, there

"will be no need of כפרה "an atonement," nor of "deliverance, or prosperity, for all these things will be had."

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

Having therefore, brethren] As they were to the apostle, in a natural and civil sense, being Hebrews, as well as in a spiritual relation, being believers in Christ; which is observed, to testify his affection to them, and to engage their regard to the duties hereafter urged, particularly brotherly love, and to signify their common and equal right to the privilege next mentioned, which is,

Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus] The place saints have boldness to enter into is heaven, called *the holiest*, in reference to the holy of holies, in the tabernacle; which was a type of it, for the sacredness and invisibility of it, and for what was in it, went into it, or was brought thither; as the Shekinah, or divine majesty, which resided there; the high priest, who went into it once a year; the blood of sacrifices, which was carried into it; the sweet incense; the ark of the testimony, in which was the law; and the mercyseat; all which were typical of Christ, his person, blood, sacrifice, righteousness, intercession, and the grace and mercy which come through him. Heaven was symbolically shut by the sin of man, when he was drove out of the garden of Eden; it was typically opened by the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies, on the day of atonement; Christ has in person entered into it by his blood, and opened the way for his people; and believers in him may enter now, and they do, when they exercise grace on him, who is there; and when they come and present their prayers and praises to God by him; and they have now an actual right to enter into the place itself, and will hereafter enter in person: and the manner of their present entrance is, *with boldness*; which signifies their right unto it, the liberty granted them by God, and the liberty which they sometimes have in their own souls, and great courage and intrepidity of mind; which arises from a sense of remission of sins, as may be concluded from the connection of these words with the preceding; and is found to be true by experience; and such boldness is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission. The way of entrance is *by the blood of Jesus*; and which gives both entrance and boldness; for hereby sin is removed both from the sight of God, and the conscience of the believer; peace is made with God.

(*x*) R. Abendana Not. in Mielol Yophi in Pl. lxii. 20.
VOL. V.

and spoken to him; pardon is procured, law and justice satisfied, and neither to be feared, and the everlasting covenant confirmed.

20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

By a new and living way] Which is Christ, the God-man and Mediator; who is called the *new way*, not as to contrivance, revelation, or use; for it was contrived before the world was, and was revealed to our first parents, immediately after the fall, and was made use of by all the Old Testament saints; but in distinction to the *old way* of life, by the covenant of works; and because newly revealed with greater clearness and evidence; see *y. 8.* and because it is always new, it never will be old, nor otherwise; there never will be another way: some render it, "a new slain way;" because Jesus was but newly slain, and his blood lately shed, by which the way is, and entrance is with boldness: and Christ is a *living way*; in opposition to the dead carcases of slain beasts, and to the dead and killing letter of the law: Christ gives life to all his people; and all that walk in him, the way, live; and none in this way ever die; it leads to eternal life, and infallibly brings them thither.

Which he hath consecrated for us] Either God the Father, and so it intends the designation of Christ to be the way to life and happiness, and the qualification of him for it, by preparing a body, an human nature for him, and anointing it with the holy Spirit, and the instalment of him into his priestly office, called a *consecration*, chap. vii. 28. or else Christ himself, and so designs his compliance with his Father's will, and his devoting of himself to this service; his preparation of himself to be the way, by the shedding of his blood, and by his entrance into heaven, and by giving a clearer discovery of this way in the Gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light: and this is done

Through the veil, that is to say, his flesh] The human nature of Christ, through which the way to heaven is opened, renewed, and consecrated, is compared to the veil of the tabernacle, *Exodus xxvi. 31—33.* the matter of which that was made, was fine-twined linen, which, the Jews say (*y.*), was of thread six times doubled; which may denote the holiness of Christ's human nature, the strength, courage, and steadfastness of it, under all its sorrows and sufferings; and the purity and duration of his righteousness: the colours of it

were blue, purple, and scarlet, which may signify the sufferings of the human nature; the preciousness of Christ's blood, and the dignity of his person, and his royalty; purple and scarlet, being wore by kings: the veil was of cunning work, which may intend the curious workmanship of Christ's human nature, and the graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; and it was made with *cherubim*, pointing to the ministration of angels, both to Christ, and to his people. The pillars of it may signify the Deity of Christ, the support of his human nature, in which it has its personal subsistence; and being of Shittim wood, may denote his eternity; and being covered with gold, his glory: its hooks and sockets may be symbolical of the union of the two natures in him.

21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

The church of God, over which Christ is as Prophet, Priest, and King, and as the Son and owner of it; see the notes on chapters iii. 6. and iv. 14. In the Greek text it is, "a great priest;" so the Messiah is called by the Targum on *Zach. vi. 12.* כהן גדול "a great priest," as he is; even a great high priest, as in chapter iv. 14. and greater than Aaron, or any of his sons.

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us draw near with a true heart] Either to the holiest of all, into which the saints have boldness to enter; or to Christ the high priest who is entered there; or to the house of God, over which he is an high priest; or rather to God himself, as on a throne of grace, on the mercysseat in heaven, the most holy place: to draw near to him is a sacerdotal act, common to all the saints, who are made priests to God; and includes the whole of divine worship, but more especially designs prayer; to which believers are encouraged from the liberty and boldness they may have and use, of entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; from Christ's being the new and living way into it, and from his being an high priest over the house of God: the manner of drawing near, is, *with a true heart*; not with the body only, but with the heart principally; with a renewed one, one that is right with God, and is single and sincere, is hearty in its desires, and upright in its ends.

In full assurance of faith] In God, Father, Son, and Spirit; without faith, drawing near to God, can

(y) Maimoni. Cele Hamikdash, c. 3. §. 14. Jarchi in *Exod. xxvi. 1.* Kimchi in *Sepher Shorash*, rad. 712.

can neither be acceptable to him, nor of service to men; and a full assurance of faith, with respect to the object drawn nigh unto, and of the way unto him, and of acceptance with him through Christ, and of having the petitions put up to him granted, is very comfortable to believers, greatly becomes them, and is well-pleasing to God.

Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience] Which is blind, inactive, partial, stupid, or guilty; and it is the blood of Christ, which being sprinkled on it by the Spirit of God, purges it from dead works, cleanses it from all sin, and speaks peace and pardon to it; and such may draw near with freedom and boldness, with readiness and cheerfulness, and with reverence and godly fear.

And our bodies washed with pure water] Not baptismal water, but the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to water, in scripture: the body, as well as soul, needs washing, and renewing; internal grace influences outward actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be presented holy to God. The allusion is to a custom of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their bodies, and make them clean, when they prayed. So Aben Ezra observes on *Genesis* xxxv. 2. "That every Israelite, when he went to pray at a fixed place, was obliged to have, גופו נקי" "his body pure," and his garments "pure." So a priest might not enter into the court for service, though clean, until he had washed himself all over (ז); and it is to sacerdotal acts that the reference is here.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised:

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering] Either in the grace or doctrine of faith, or in the profession of both: see the note on chap. iv. 14.

For he is faithful that promised] That is, God; and it is true of Father, Son, and Spirit; but God the Father may be more especially designed: he is a promising God, and is known to be so by his people; he is eminently and emphatically the promiser; and all other promisers, and the promises made by them, signify little; but the promises of God are exceeding great and precious, very ancient, free and unconditional, irrevocable and immutable, and are admirably suited to the cases of his people, and will be fulfilled every one of them: they include in them things temporal,

spiritual, and eternal: things temporal, as that his people shall not want, that their afflictions shall work for good, and that he will support them under all their troubles: things spiritual, as that he will be their God, which takes in his everlasting love to them, and his gracious presence with them, and his protection of them; and that all grace shall be wrought in them, and every blessing of grace bestowed on them: and things eternal; as everlasting glory and happiness; the promise of eternal life was in God's heart, made in the covenant, and put into Christ's hands before the world began, and is declared in the Gospel: now God is faithful to all his promises, nor can he fail, or deceive; he is all-wise and fore-knowing of every thing that comes to pass; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; and he is able to perform, and is the God of truth, and cannot lie; nor has he ever failed in any one of his promises, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; and this is a strong argument to hold fast a profession of faith.

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

And let us consider one another] Saints should consider one another as men, that they are but men, of like passions and infirmities; they should consider their different tempers, and make allowance for them, and their outward state and condition in the world: they should consider one another as saints, partakers of the same grace; as that they are all loved with the same love, all conceived and brought forth in the womb of God's eternal electing grace, interested in the same covenant, redeemed by the same blood, and have the same graces and privileges, and an equal right to glory; having one and the same spirit, the same grace of faith, the same righteousness, the same fountain to wash in, the same fulness to partake of, the same throne of grace to go to, and the same inheritance to enjoy: they should consider one another as church-members, the grace and gifts of one another, their different age and standing in the church, their relation to each other as brethren; they should consider them under suffering or sorrowful circumstances, under afflictions, temptations, desertions, declensions, and as attended with infirmities and sins: and the end of such consideration should be,

To provoke unto love] To brotherly love, to stir it up, and stir up to it, which is apt to wax cold, that so it may be rekindled, and give a most vehement flame; for this is Christ's new commandment, the bond of perfection, the evidence of regeneration, that which makes the saints commu-

(z) *Mishn. Yoma*, c. 3. §. 3. *Vid. Philo de Victimis Offerent.* p. 248.

nion comfortable and delightful, and without which a profession of religion is in vain.

And to good works] Not for justification before God, and in order to procure salvation; but that God may be glorified, the Gospel adorned, the mouths of gainfayers stopped, faith evidenced to the world, and gratitude to God for his benefits shewn, and for the profit and advantage of fellow-creatures, and fellow-christians.

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together] Or the episyndagogue of one another; which word is used to distinguish christian assemblies from Jewish synagogues, and to denote the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in one church-state, and to express the saints gathering together to Christ; see 2 *Thess.* ii. 1. and their act of meeting together in some one place to attend his worship, word, and ordinances. Now to *forsake* such *assembling*, signifies a great infrequency in attending with the saints, a rambling from place to place, and takes in an entire apostasy. It is the duty of saints to assemble together for public worship, on the account of God, who has appointed it, who approves of it, and whose glory is concerned in it; and on the account of the saints themselves, that they may be delighted, refreshed, comforted, instructed, edified, and perfected; and on account of others, that they may be convinced, converted, and brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ; and in imitation of the primitive saints. And an assembling together ought not to be forsaken; for it is a forsaking God and their own mercies, and such are like to be forsaken of God; nor is it known what is lost hereby; and it is the first outward visible step to apostasy, and often issues in it.

As the manner of some is] Or custom; and this prevailing custom among these Jews might arise from contempt of the Gentiles, or from fear of reproach and persecution; and in our day, this evil practice arises sometimes from a vain conceit of being in no need of ordinances, and from an over-love of the world, and from a great declension in the exercise of grace; the consequence of it is very bad. The Jews (a) reckon among those that go down to hell, and perish, and have no part in the world to come, חפורשים מורי עבר, who separate from the ways of the congrega-

tion; that is, who do not do the duties thereof, attend with it, and fast when that does, and the like.

But exhorting one another] To prayer, to attend public worship, to regard all the duties of religion, to adhere to Christ, and a profession of him, and to consider him, and walk on in him: or "comforting one another;" by meeting privately together, and conferring about experience, and the doctrines of grace; and by observing to one another the promises of God, relating to public worship; and by putting each other in mind of the bright day of the Lord, that is coming on.

And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching] Either of death, or the last judgment, or rather of Jerusalem's destruction; which at the writing of this epistle was near at hand; and was an affair that greatly concerned these Hebrews; and by various symptoms might be observed by them as approaching; and which was no inconsiderable argument to engage them to a diligent discharge of their duty; unless the day of darkness, infidelity, and blasphemy in the last days of the world, should be intended, after which will succeed the latter-day glory.

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

For if we sin wilfully] Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.

After that we have received the knowledge of the truth] Either of Jesus Christ, or of the scriptures, or of the Gospel, or of some particular doctrine, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the apostle speaks in the first person plural, *we*, this is used not so much with regard to himself, but others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them; when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jealousies of them, which would greatly distress the minds of those that were truly gracious. Moreover,

(a) T. Bab. Rosh Hashanah, fol. 17. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 3. §. 6, 11.

over, the apostles use this way of speaking, when they do not design themselves at all, but others, under the same visible profession of religion, and who belonged to the same community of believers; see 1 Pet. iv. 3. Titus iii. 3. Eph. ii. 3. compared with Acts xxii. 3. and chap. xxvi. 5. Phil. iii. 6. Besides, these words are only hypothetical, and do not prove that true believers could, or should, or do sin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifestly distinguished from these persons, v. 38, 39.

There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins] Meaning, not typical sacrifice; for though the daily sacrifice ought to have ceased at the death of Christ, yet it did not in fact until the destruction of Jerusalem; but the sacrifice of Christ, which will never be repeated; Christ will die no more; his blood will not be shed again; nor his sacrifice reiterated; nor will any other sacrifice be offered; there will be no other saviour; there is no salvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we must be saved. These words have been wrongly made use of to prove that persons sinning after baptism, are not to be restored to communion again upon repentance; and being understood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great distress to consciences burdened with the guilt of sin, committed after a profession of religion: but the true sense of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men by his blood and sacrifice; and yet after this, against all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own consciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obstinately persist in the denial of it; seeing there is no more, no other sacrifice for sin, no other saviour, nor any salvation in any other way, the case of these men must be desperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their sin they shut up against themselves, in principle and practice, the way of salvation, as follows.

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment] Either of some outward visible judgment in this life, which sometimes falls on such persons; or of the particular judgment, which immediately follows after death; or of the universal judgment after the resurrection, and the dreadful sentence of condemnation which will then pass, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Christ, and according to truth, and in strict

justice; it is certain, and there will be no escaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more especially in such men before described, when their consciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpressibly so.

And fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries] Which is to be understood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the Papists; this is for adversaries, that, as is supposed, is for friends: but perhaps some fiery judgment, expressive of the wrath and indignation of God, such as befel Sodom and Gomorrah, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the men that rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron: or rather, the fire of hell, which is not corporal and material; but is the wrath of God let down into the conscience; which shews the vile nature of sin, the strictness of God's justice, and the intolerableness of future punishment: and this is said to devour the adversaries; not only open ones, but secret, underhand enemies, as the word here signifies; as such apostates are, before described, to God, and Christ, and the Spirit; to the Gospel, its doctrine, discipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godliness in them: and with the fire of God's wrath they shall be devoured; not so as to be annihilated, but shall be eternally destroyed both soul and body; that is, everlastingly punished, or punished with everlasting destruction.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses:

He that despised Moses' law] By breaking it wilfully and presumptuously, for which there was no sacrifice; meaning the law which Moses was the minister of, not the author; and it respects the whole body of laws given by him from God; and is instanced in for the sake of the comparison between him and Christ, and between the Law and the Gospel, and for the illustration of the case in hand. Now one that transgressed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular precept of it, presumptuously,

Died without mercy] A corporal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shewn him, Deut. xiii. 8. and chapter xix. 13.

Under two or three witnesses] Who "stood by," or were present," as the Arabic version renders it, when the transgression was committed; or "that accused him," as the Ethiopic version; that were witnesses against him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, *Deut. xvii. 6.* and chapter *xix. 15.*

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Of how much sorer punishment] Than a mere corporal death, which was the punishment inflicted on the transgressors of the law of Moses.

Suppose ye] The apostle appeals to the Hebrews themselves, and makes them judges of what punishment

Shall he be thought worthy] Who is described as follows:

Who hath trodden under foot the Son of God] This seems to be a stronger expression than crucifying him again, chapter vii. 6. and is to be understood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will, by persons, who, could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phrase expressive of the utmost scorn, contempt, and ill usage; and which such are guilty of, who deny his Deity, and eternal Sonship; who render him useless in his offices, undervalue his sacrifice, despise his righteousness, and strip him of the glory of his person, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the Son of God, who is thus used; who become the son of man for the sake of men, is superior to men, and equal with God.

And hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing] Or "common thing;" putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most counting it, *אין וכלוב*, "as that of another man," as the Syriac version renders it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being the blood of the covenant; of the covenant of grace, because that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the blessings of it come through it; and from sanctification by it: either of the person, the apostate himself, who was sanctified or separated from others by a visible profession of religion;

having given himself up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Gospel; and having submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's supper, and drank of the cup, the blood of the New Testament, or covenant; though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols of them, as common things; or who professed himself, and was looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and to be justified by the blood of Christ, though he was not really so: or rather, the Son of God himself is meant, who was sanctified, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priests office: so Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the same blood he was bought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, he ever lives to make intercession, which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish. This clause, *wherewith he was sanctified*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?] By denying his being, deity, and personality; despising his powerful operations as enthusiasm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illusions; and ascribing his miracles to Satan, and representing the Gospel dictated by him, as a fable, or a lie: and this is aggravated by his being the Spirit of grace; the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the saints; and who therefore ought not to be in the least slighted, but highly esteemed and honoured; nor will such affronts go unpunished.

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

For we know him that hath said] That is God, whom the apostle and the Hebrews knew, not merely by the works of creation and providence, but by the scriptures, which they were favoured with, and by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles, and by which they knew his being, nature, and perfections; particularly, that what he said he was able to perform; and that he was true and faithful to every word of his, and to what he has said; *Deut. xxxii. 35.*

Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord] Vengeance belongs to God, not as to the affection, as if there was any such passion in him; but as to the effect, there being that

that produced by him, which answers to the effect of such a passion among men, namely, punishment: and punishment for sin belongs to God, against whom it is committed; and not to heathen deities, one of which goes by the name of vengeance, *Acts* xxviii. 4. nor to Satan, and his spiteful angels; nor to men, to exercise it in a private and personal way; though civil magistrates, being in God's stead, are allowed to exercise it in a public way, according to the laws of God: and there is good reason to believe, that what the Lord here says, *I will recompense*, or revenge sin, shall be done; which may be concluded from his hatred of sin; from his purity, holiness, and justice; from his faithfulness to his word; from his omnipotence; from the notice he takes of sin, in his own people, in a way of chastisement and correction; and from the vengeance he has poured on his own Son, as their surety.

And again] In *Deut.* xxxii. 36.

The Lord shall judge his people] Such as are truly so, his chosen and covenant people, his redeemed and called ones; these he judges by chastising them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and by governing and protecting them; and by vindicating and pleading their cause, and avenging them on their enemies: or else such as are only his people by profession; on these he will write a *lo-ammi*; he distinguishes them from his own, and judges between them, and his people, and will condemn them; nor will their profession screen them from his wrath and vengeance.

31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

For this is to be understood, not in a good sense; so in general all mankind may be said to fall into, or be in the hands of God, as they are the work of his hands, the care of his providence, and are subject to his sovereignty; and in especial manner, believers, whose times and persons are in God's hand; which bespeaks his great affection for them, their nearness to him, the support they have by him, and protection from him; and they choose to fall into the hands of him as a chastising Father, rather than into the hands of men; and at death commend themselves into his hands: but here it is taken in a bad sense, and signifies to be arrested by justice as a criminal, and be brought to the bar of God, and receive the sentence of condemnation; when such will feel the weight of his hand, and the fierceness of his wrath; and this is a *fearful thing*: it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, in-

jured and affronted, and that have power, and will shew no mercy; it is very tremendous to fall into the hands of God, in the way of his judgments in this world; the apprehensions of a future judgment are terrible before-hand; and the apparatus of the judgment, when it comes, will be very striking and surprising; but to stand before the Judge, charged with sin, naked, and without a righteousness, speechless, and no one to speak in favour of them; to hear the dreadful sentence pronounced, and feel the wrath of God to the uttermost, how horrible must this be! The aggravations of this are, that it is into the hands of God, that such fall, and not into the hands of men, or mere creatures; but of God, who is omniscient, and sees through all pretences; omnipotent, and none can rescue out of his hands by force; omnipresent, and so no escaping from him; just and faithful, and not to be bribed; inexorable, immutable and unalterable: and that he is the living God; in opposition to the lifeless deities of the Gentiles, and to mortal men; and is expressive of his eternity, and so of the duration of the sinner's punishment, that falls into his hands.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

But call to remembrance the former days] The words may be considered, either as a declaration of what they had done, and be read, "but ye do call to remembrance," &c. or as an exhortation to remember the days of their espousals, the times of their first conversion: and the apostle's design in this, is to mitigate the terror the preceding words might strike them with; and to aggravate the disgrace of turning back, when they had behaved so bravely in former times; and to encourage their faith and trust in God.

In which, after ye were illuminated] By the Spirit of God, to see their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness, and their lost and miserable state by nature; and to behold Christ and salvation by him; and to have some light into the doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimmering of the glories of another world. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it *baptized*; now such as are converted, and are brought to make a public profession of their faith, and submit to the ordinances of Christ, are, in common, immediately called to suffer reproach and persecution of one kind or another; so Christ, after his baptism, was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: Satan is spiteful and malicious, and God suffers afflictions to befall his people to try their graces, and

and to inure them to troubles betimes, as follows;

Ye endured a great fight of afflictions] Meaning some violent persecution from their own countrymen, either at the death of Stephen, in which the apostle, being then unconverted, was concerned himself; or rather some other time of trouble, after the apostle was converted, to which he seems to have respect in *1 Thess. ii. 14, 15.* these Hebrews, being enlisted as soldiers under Christ, the captain of their salvation, were quickly engaged in a warfare, and were called forth to fight a fight of afflictions, and a very great one; and which they endured with patience, courage, and intrepidity.

33 Partly, whilst we were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

Partly, whilst we were made a gazing stock] Brought upon the stage or theatre, and made a spectacle to the world, angels, and men, *1 Cor. iv. 9.*

Both by reproaches and afflictions] Suffering both in their characters and reputations, and in their persons and substance.

And partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used] They maintained their communion with them, relieved them in distress, and sympathised with them.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds] When he was bound at Jerusalem, by the chief captain Lyfias, with two chains, *Acts xxi. 33.* or when he was in bonds elsewhere; which they did by sympathising with him in their hearts; by their prayers for him, and in their letters to him; and by sending presents to him for his relief and support. The Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, "had compassion on the prisoners, or "them that were bound;" meaning prisoners in general, remembering them that were in bonds, as bound with them; or particularly such, as were prisoners for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and it may be some of them, which the apostle himself committed to prison, in his state of unregeneracy.

And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods] The furniture of their houses, their worldly substance, of which they were stripped by their persecutors; and this they took quietly and patiently, yea, joyfully; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer the confiscation of their goods, for the sake of Christ; the reason of which joy, was,

Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance] That which is laid up for the saints in heaven is *substance*; it is signified by an house, a city, a kingdom; and so it is rendered here in the Ethiopic version; and by riches, true, glorious, and durable; and by a treasure and an inheritance: and this is *better* than any thing in this world; as to the quality of it, it being celestial; and as to the quantity of it, it being all things; and as to the place where it is, *in heaven*; though this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and as to the company with whom it is enjoyed, saints in light; yea, God himself is the portion of his people: and this is an *enduring substance*; it cannot be wasted by the saints themselves; nor taken away from them by others; nor can it decay in its own nature; and the saints will always endure to enjoy it: and this they may be said to *have*; it is promised to them, and prepared for them; they have a right unto it, and the earnest of it; and they have it already in Christ, their head and representative; so that it is, upon all accounts, sure unto them: and this they *know in themselves*; from what they find and feel in their own hearts; from the sealing testimony and earnest of the spirit, and from the promise of Christ, *Matt. v. 10.*

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

Cast not away therefore your confidence] The same word is used here, as in *ψ. 19.* where it is translated *boldness*; and may design here, as there, an holy boldness in prayer, free from a servile and bashful spirit; and which appears in a liberty of speaking to God, and in a confidence of being heard; prayer itself should not be left off, nor should freedom, boldness, and confidence in it be slackened, or laid aside: or else a profession of faith is intended, which ought to be free and open, bold and courageous, firm and constant; and which ought by no means to be let go and dropped: or the grace of faith in its full assurance, with respect to interest in God, as a covenant God and Father, and in his love; and with respect to interest in Christ, and in his grace, and a right to the glorious inheritance, the better and

and enduring substance; and this shield of faith is by no means to be cast away; it was reckoned infamous and scandalous in soldiers, to lose or cast away their shield; with the Grecians it was a capital crime, and punished with death (b); to which the apostle may here allude. There are two sorts of believers, nominal and real; and there are two sorts of faith; an historical one, which may be in persons destitute of the grace of God, and is in devils; and a true and unfeigned one, which has salvation connected with it; the former may be cast away and lost; the latter, though it may be remiss and weak in its exercise, yet it cannot be wholly and finally lost; and this exhortation may be designed, as a means of continuing it, and of perseverance in it: the reason urging it follows,

Which hath great recompence of reward] Freedom and boldness in prayer has its reward, for such that ask in faith shall have; and so has a firm and constant profession of religion, for he that endures to the end shall be saved; and so has a true and strong faith in Christ; everlasting salvation is connected with it; the reward of the inheritance follows upon it; and this reward is the recompence of God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himself, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Christ and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deserts of men, and beyond all thought and expression.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For ye have need of patience] Not that they were destitute of the grace of patience; for where God is the God of all grace, he is the God of patience; and such, who are called by grace, are conformed to the image of Christ, and, among other things, are like him in this; and those who are born of the Spirit, have the fruits of the Spirit, and this among the rest; to whom the word of God is effectual, this fruit is produced in them, that being the word of patience; and such who are brought into the kingdom of Christ, are also in the patience of Jesus; where there is one grace, there is every grace: saints are immediately called to sufferings and trials, which require patience; and, without this, there can be no enjoyment of a man's self: but the meaning is, that they needed the continuance, exercise, and increase of it, in general, to run the race set before them; to bear afflictions from the hand of God, and reproaches

and persecutions from men; to wait for God when he hides his face, and for answers of prayer, when they are deferred; and to bear up, and not to sink under temptations; and to live in the constant expectation of heaven and happiness: and, in particular, it is necessary for the following,

That, after ye have done the will of God] There is the purposing will of God, which is done by himself; and there is his revealed will, touching the salvation of men, which is done by his Son; and there is his will of precept, to be done by men; and which, when done aright, is done according to the rule of his word, in faith, from love, through the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of his Spirit and grace, with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done: and the will of God regards suffering, as well as doing; for to that the saints are also called, to which patience is necessary.

Ye might receive the promise] That is, of eternal life; not the promise itself, which they had received already, but the thing promised; which is the sense in which this word is often used in this book, chapters vi. 12, 17. and xi. 13, 39. which is so called, to shew that it is not of works, for promise and merit do not agree together; but that it is of grace, and will certainly be enjoyed, but must be patiently waited for.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come] That the person spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the prophecy in Hab. ii. 3. here referred to, and from the character of him that is to come, Matt. xi. 3. and from parallel places, James v. 7, 8, 9. and this is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh, for he was come in the flesh already; though Habakkuk indeed refers to his first coming, yet not to that only, but including his second coming also; but of his coming in his kingdom and power to destroy Jerusalem, and take vengeance on the Jews for their rejection of him: the kingdom of Christ was at hand, when he began to preach; upon his ascension to heaven, it began to appear more visibly; but still the temple was standing, and that worship continued, which stood in the way of the glory of his kingdom; during which time the saints suffered much: but in a little while from the writing of this epistle, he, who was to come, did come, even within about ten years after this, and shewed his power and his glory, in delivering his people, and destroying his enemies; see Matt. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. It may be applied

(b) Alex. ab Alexand. Genial. Diet. l. 2. c. 13.
Vol. V.

plied to his coming to help his people in time of need; the afflictions of the saints are many; they are all for an appointed time, and but for a while; and Christ has promised to come, and visit them; and which he does often, and speedily, and seasonably: it may also be accommodated to Christ coming to take his people to himself by death; Christ may be said to come in this sense, and he will certainly come; and this will be in a little while: man is but of few days; death is certain, and should be patiently expected: and it may likewise be suitably improved, with respect to Christ's coming to judgment; that he will come is certain, from prophecies, particularly from the prophecy of Enoch, from his own words, from the testimony of angels, from the institution of the Lord's supper till he comes, and from the general expectation of the saints; and this coming of his is desirable, because it will be the marriage of the Lamb, and the redemption of the saints; and because of the grace and glory that will be brought unto them, and because they shall then be for ever with him; and this will be quickly, in a little time, in comparison of the time that went before his first coming, and of the eternity that will follow after this; and though it may seem long, yet with God it is but a little while, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and however, since it is certain that he will come,

And will not tarry] Beyond the appointed time; patience should be exercised.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Now the just shall live by faith] The just man is one, not in appearance only, but in reality; not by his obedience to the law, but by the obedience of Christ; and he is evidently so by the Spirit, and by faith: and he is one who lives soberly and righteously; and the life he lives, and shall live, at present, is not eternal life; for though he shall live that life, yet this is not intended; for it is a living by faith, that is spoken of, and as antecedent to the coming of Christ; but a spiritual life is meant, a life of justification in Christ, a life of communion with Christ, and a life of holiness from Christ, with peace, joy, and comfort through him: and the manner of this just man's living is by faith; not upon his faith, but upon Christ, the object of it; and by his faith, as in *Hab. ii. 4.* his own, and not another's; or by the faith of Christ: the Syriac version here renders it, "by the faith of myself;" that is, by the faith of Christ, who speaks, and who is the author and object of faith: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin ver-

sion, read, "my just man shall live by faith:" and this life is to be now, in the mean while, until Christ comes, and because he will certainly come.

But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him] The Hebrew word נָשָׂא used in *Hab. ii. 4.* and which, by the Septuagint there, and by the apostle here, is translated by *προσλαμβάνει*, and rendered *draw back*; according to R. David Kimchi (c), signifies "pride and haughtiness of heart;" and, according to R. Sol. Jarchi (d) it signifies "impudence;" R. Moses Kimchi (e) takes it to be the same with *בֵּרֶךְ* which is used for a tower, or fortified place; and thinks, it designs one, who betakes himself to such a place for safety from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance: so that such a person seems to be designed, who swells with pride and confidence in his own righteousness; who betakes himself to some fortress of his own for safety; who withdraws from the assembly of the saints, through fear of reproach and persecuting; who withholds the truth, shuns to declare it, or maintain a profession of it; plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully in religious things; and, in short, it may intend one, who finally and totally apostatizes from the doctrine of faith, and the profession of it: and in such persons God has no pleasure, never had, nor never will have; but, on the contrary, they are abominable to him, and will lie under his sore displeasure, and feel the keen resentments of it; such stand opposed to the just man, that *lives by faith*, walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ, in which he is safe from condemnation, and secure of the divine favour; for drawing back is not supposed of the just man, but of any man, as we, with the Ethiopic version, rightly supply: and is to be understood of any one of the external professors of religion, who forsake the assembling of the saints, *ψ. 25.* and is denied of the truly righteous in the following words.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition] There is a drawing back which is not unto perdition; persons may be attended with much unbelief, may be very cold and indifferent to Gospel ordinances, may fall into great sins, and may greatly backslide, and yet be recovered, as

David,

(c) In *Hab. ii. 4.*

(d) In *ibid.*

(e) Apud R. David

Kimchi in *ibid.* & in *Sepher Shorashim*, rad. *בֵּרֶךְ*.

David, Peter, and others : and there is a drawing back to perdition ; when Christ is rejected as the alone Saviour ; when he is not held to as the head ; when false doctrines, and damnable heresies are given into ; and when men draw back, and never return, nor are they, nor can they be returned, and their apostasy is total and final : but true believers do not, and cannot *draw back* in this sense ; because they are held fast in the arms, and with the cords of everlasting love ; are chosen of God unto salvation, are given unto Christ, and secured in him ; they are redeemed and purchased by him ; they are united to him, and built upon him ; they are interested in his prayers and preparations, and are his jewels, and his portion ; they are regenerated, sanctified, inhabited, and sealed by the Spirit of God, and have the promises and power of God on their side.

But of them that believe to the saving of the soul] Or “ of faith, to the salvation of the soul ;” not of faith of miracles, nor of an historical faith ; but of that faith, which is the faith of God’s elect, is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit ; by which a soul sees Christ, goes to him, lays holds on him, commits all to him, and expects all from him : this stands opposed to *drawing back* ; for by faith a man lives, walks, and stands ; and with this is connected the salvation of the soul, as opposed to perdition ; not as though it is a cause of salvation, but as a means of God’s appointing to receive the blessings of salvation, and which is entirely consistent with the grace of God ; and since salvation and faith are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall have the other, it follows, that true believers can never perish. — The nature and excellency of this grace is largely treated of in the following chapter.

CHAP. XI.

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, spoken in commendation of the grace and life of faith, and of its usefulness to preserve from apostasy, proceeds in this to give some account of the nature and actings of it ; and which he illustrates by the examples of many of the Old Testament saints : he begins with a definition of it, which consists of two parts, *ſ. 1.* and with an account of the usefulness of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, *ſ. 2.* and of the service it is of in understanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, *ſ. 3.* and then goes on to give particular instances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into several classes ; and the

first is of the saints before the flood ; Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Abel’s faith lay in offering a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, in obtaining a testimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet speaking, though dead, *ſ. 4.* Enoch’s faith is evidenced by his translation by God, that he should not see death ; and by the testimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him ; by which it is clear he had faith ; since, without it, it is impossible to please God ; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that *he is*, and has a gracious respect to all that diligently seek him, *ſ. 5, 6.* Noah’s faith was seen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the saving of his family, and in condemning the world by so doing, and by becoming an heir of righteousness through faith, *ſ. 7.* The next class is, that of the saints from the flood to the times of Moses ; in which are Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Abraham’s faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where ; and for his sojourning in the promised land, as in a strange one, in which Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him in tabernacles ; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord ; and for his offering up his son at the command of God, who was the son of promise ; believing that God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith, *ſ. 8—10, 17—19.* Sarah’s faith lay in receiving strength through it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child, when past age ; which was founded upon the faithfulness of a promising God ; hence from Abraham, by her, sprung a large posterity, like the stars of the sky, and the sand on the seashore, *ſ. 11, 12.* Now all these patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it ; who, though they had not received the things promised, yet by faith saw them at a distance, were very well persuaded they would come to pass, and so, in some sense, enjoyed them ; hence, whilst they lived, they lived like pilgrims and strangers, shewing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but sought another, a better, and an heavenly one ; so that God is not ashamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them, *ſ. 13—16.* Isaac’s faith is commended in blessing his two sons with respect to things future, *ſ. 20.* and Jacob’s faith is well spoken of for blessing both the sons of Joseph in his last moments, worshipping on the top of his staff, *ſ. 21.* and

Joseph's faith is instanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, as a certain thing; and in giving them strict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence, *ψ*. 22. The third class of men, famous for faith, is that of such from the times of Moses to the Judges; in which are the parents of Moses, Moses himself, the Israelites in general, and the harlot Rahab. The parents of Moses shewed their faith in hiding him three months, seeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king's edict, *ψ*. 23. Moses's faith lay in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ, to the riches of Egypt; he having by faith a respect to the heavenly glory, another instance of it; and by forsaking Egypt, without fear of the king's displeasure, by faith seeing a King who is invisible; and by keeping the passover, with the sprinkling of blood, that so the destroyer of the first-born of Egypt might not touch the Israelites, *ψ*. 24—28. The instances of the faith of the Israelites, are their passage through the Red sea, as on dry land, when the Egyptians, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, *ψ*. 29, 30. The faith of Rahab, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the spies that came to her; and for the salvation she believed she should have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho perished, *ψ*. 31. And the last class of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the Maccabees; the judges, kings, and prophets, are lumped together, and only a few of their names are observed as a specimen of the rest, the apostle not having time to mention every particular one, *ψ*. 32. and various instances of faith, without reference to particular persons to whom they belong, are recorded; some which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous, *ψ*. 33—35. and others in suffering things the most cruel and torturing, and death itself in divers shapes, *ψ*. 35—38. And thus, by an induction of particulars, the apostle proves both his definition of faith, *ψ*. 1. and the usefulness of it to the elders, *ψ*. 2. they by it obtaining a good report, though they did not receive the thing promised, *ψ*. 39. wherefore New Testament saints have great encouragement, and much more reason to exercise this grace; since God has provided for them the better thing he promised to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, *ψ*. 40.

NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for] The faith here spoken of, is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare assent to any thing revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Gospel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profession of faith, which sometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the just man lives, and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it: and it does not so much design any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general respects the various promises, and blessings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old Testament saints, though that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the same with the faith of New Testament ones; and is a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest therein, and in all special blessings: it is described as *the substance of things hoped for*, and which, in general, are things unseen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, though possible, otherwise there would be no hope of them; and which are promised and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old Testament saints, were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by New Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the *substance* of these things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is some standing for hope; in which sense the word *υποστασις* is used by the Septuagint in *Psalms* lxi. 2. The word of promise is the principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a less principal ground; it is a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance of them. The Syriac version renders it, the *certainty* of them; it is the subsistence of them, and what gives them an existence, at least a mental one; so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were; and so are heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things beforehand, *John* vi. 47. Philo the Jew (*ε*) says much the same thing of faith; "The only infallible and certain good"

“good thing, says he, is, that faith which is faith towards God; it is the solace of life, *παρηγορία* “*χρησις ληψιδω*,” “the fulness of good hopes, &c.” It follows here,

The evidence of things not seen] Of things past, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace: of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of things present, the being, perfections, love, &c. of God; of the session of Christ at God’s right hand; and his continual intercession; and of the various blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel; and of future ones, as the invisible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but such who lived in ancient times; some before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or ecclesiastical, and were the ancestors and predecessors of the Hebrews; who in general obtained, or received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and should be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holiness; and from evil men, for their good works: and these also believed the report of the Gospel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profession; particularly, Abel received a good report, that he was righteous; and Enoch, that he pleased God, and walked with him; and Noah, that he was a just man, perfect in his generation, and also walked with God; and Abraham, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and Job, that he was a man that feared God, and shunned evil; and Moses, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one; and David, that he was a man after God’s own heart, and fulfilled his will; and so of others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which shews that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The apostle mentions this, to take off the Hebrews from any esteem of their traditionary elders who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage to their imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wisdom superior to them: and to let them know, unless they had the same faith with

their ancestors, it would be a vain thing to boast of descent from them.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God] The celestial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the starry and etherial worlds, with all that is in them, the sun, moon, stars, and fowls of the air; the terrestrial world, with all upon it, men, beasts, &c. and the watry world, the sea, and all that is therein; perhaps some respect may be had to the distinction of worlds among the Jews; see the note on chap. i. 2. though the apostle can scarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vast numbers of worlds being created: they often speak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they say, there are heavens, earth, stars, planets, &c. (f) and sometimes of eighteen thousand (g); but these notions are rightly charged by Philo (h) with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made by the Word of God; by Christ, the essential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is ascribed in John i. 1, 2, 3. And this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who ascribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the Targumists (i), and Philo the Jew (k). And these are framed by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things less perfect, before those that were more so in the visible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith, that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows:

So that things which are seen] As the heaven, earth, and sea, and in which the invisible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are discerned:

Were not made of things which do appear] They were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and indigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered

(f) Mifn. Okeztim, c. 3. §. 12. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30. Kettoreth Hassam in Targum Jon. in Gen. fol. 4. 4. Lex. Cabal p. 60, 61. (g) T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 30. 4. (h) De Opificio, p. 49. (i) Targum Onk. in Deut. xxiii. 27. & Ben Uzz. l. in If. xlviii. 13. (k) De Opificio, p. 4. & Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 44.

covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from secret and hidden ideas in the divine mind; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is, מֵאֵין "out of nothing (1)." There seems to be an allusion to the word אֵין used for creation, which signifies "to make appear a thing unseen;" and is rendered in the Septuagint version by δεικνυμι, *Numb.* xvi. 30. and καὶ δεικνυμι, *Isaiah* xl. 26. and xli. 20. "to shew, or make appear;" and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, *Gen.* i. 1, 2. "and created to make," as in *Gen.* ii. 3. that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain] The apostle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with Abel. It may seem strange that Adam and Eve are not mentioned; this omission is not because they were not believers; but either because of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or because the apostle speaks only of such who had received some eminent testimony by faith, and therefore passes by many believers, and hastens to Abraham, the father of the Jews. The superior excellency of Abel's sacrifice to Cain's, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in shew; the one was offered in faith, the other not; Abel looked thro' his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, not so Cain. Abel's sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ the Lamb of God; a firstling, a figure of him who is the first-born of every creature; one of the fattest of his flock, expressive of the excellency of Christ; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Christ at the end of the world; and the superior excellency of the sacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, *Gen.* iv. 3—5. from whence it may be observed, that sacrifices were of divine institution, and were very early types of Christ; and that there always were two sorts of worshippers, spiritual and carnal ones, whom God can distinguish, for he seeth not as man seeth: that the acceptance of persons is in Christ, and is previous

to their offerings; that whatsoever works do not spring from faith, are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth-privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and distinguishing grace very early took place, and appeared.

By which he obtained witness that he was righteous] Not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteousness of Christ, which his faith in his sacrifice looked unto; though it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witness in his own conscience, from the Spirit of God, testifying that he was a justified person; and in consequence of this, he had an outward testimony bore to him in the scriptures, that he was a righteous person; hence he is called *righteous Abel*, *Matt.* xxiii. 35.

God testifying of his gifts] Not of his own gifts, temporal or spiritual; but of Abel's gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his sacrifices; of these he testified, when he shewed respect, either by an audible voice declaring his acceptance of them; or by sending down fire from heaven upon his sacrifice, which in after-times was a symbol of acceptance.

And by it he being dead yet speaketh] Good men die, and some of them die a violent death, as did Abel, yet he speaks in the scriptures, which have a voice in them, *Luke* xvi. 29. or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or because of his faith; though he is dead, "he is yet spoken of," as the word may be rendered.

5. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

By faith Enoch was translated] Which is to be understood, not of a spiritual translation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ, as all converted persons are translated, and doubtless Enoch was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as Philip was caught away by the Spirit after the baptism of the eunuch; but of a translation from earth to heaven: and not for a while only, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but as Elijah was, there to continue, and as the living saints will be at the last day; and this was a translation of him, soul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happiness, by a change from mortality to immortality, which passed upon him; and which is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, and a proof of the

(1) Targum Hammar, fol. 1. 1. Ketoreth Hassamim in Targ. Jon. in Gen. fol. 5. 7, 2.

Old Testament saints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the sense of some of the Jewish writers concerning this affair. Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his paraphrase on *Gen. v. 24.* has these words: "And Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth, אֲרֻחָהּ "he was translated, and ascended to the firmament," (or heaven) by the Word before the Lord." And the Jerusalem Targum to the same purpose; and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and, lo, he was not, for he was translated by the Word from before the Lord; or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this translation was of God, as our apostle afterwards asserts. R. Eleazar says (m), "The holy blessed God took Enoch, and caused him to ascend to the highest heavens, and delivered into his hands all the superior treasures, &c." He is said (n) to be one of the seven which entered into paradise in their life; and some of them say (o), that God took him, בְּגוּף וְנֶפֶשׁ "body and soul;" see the *Wisdom of Solomon* iv. 10. and *Ecclesiast.* xlv. 16. And this translation is said to be by faith; not through any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor through faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of Enoch, and on him as a believer, this way.

That he should not see death] Meaning not a spiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, though some have suggested this to be the sense; and which is favoured by the character some of the Jewish writers give of Enoch, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporal death, which he died not; to which agrees the Targum of Onkelos on *Gen. v. 24.* "And Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, לֹא מָוֶת "did not kill him, or cause, or suffer him to die;" though an exemplar of that paraphrase is cited (p), without the negative particle, thus, "And he was not, for the Lord killed him," or inflicted death on him: and it is the sense of several of the Jewish commentators, that he did die a common death, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others; who by the phrase, *God took him*, understand death, for which they cite the following places, *1 Kings* xix. 4. *Ezek.* xxiv. 16, 18.

And was not found, because God had translated him] That is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven.

So Elijah, after his rapture and translation, was sought for, but could not be found, *2 Kings* ii. 16, 17.

For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God] He did those things which pleased him; he walked with God before, *Gen. v. 22, 24.* which the Targumists explain by worshipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well-pleasing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worship and service; and he was acceptable to him in Christ; the same phrase is used in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, chap. iv. 10. and *Eccles.* xlv. 16. This testimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conscience, and which now stands in the sacred scriptures, *Gen. v. 24.* Some of the Jewish writers very wickedly, and without any ground or foundation, give a different character of him; some of them say, that "he was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, and sometimes wicked, and that the holy blessed God removed him, while he was righteous (q)," and others (r), that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet represent him, as fickle and inconstant; and, therefore, God, foreseeing that he would do wickedly, to prevent it, made haste and took him away by death, before his time: and, which is not only contrary to what the apostle here says, but to the account of Moses concerning him: from whence it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the course of his conversation was holy and upright; which was the reason of his being taken, or translated; and which was an high honour bestowed upon him: and, upon the whole, he has obtained a better testimony, than those men give him.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

But without faith it is impossible to please him] Or do things well-pleasing in his sight; or, any of the duties of religion in an acceptable way; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; because such are without Christ, and without his Spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends: for this is not to be understood of the persons of God's elect, as considered in Christ; in whom they are well-pleasing to him before faith; being loved by him with an everlasting love; and chosen in

(m) Zohar in *Gen.* fol. 44. 3. (n) Dezech Erets Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1. (o) Juchasin, fol. 134. 2.
(p) In Tosephta in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & in not. ad triplex Targum in *Gen.* v. 24. Ed. Harov.

(q) Bereshit Rabba, §. 25. fol. 21. 3. (r) Zohar in *Gen.* fol. 44. 2, 3. Jarchi in *Gen.* v. 24. *Wisd.* c. iv. 11—14.

in Christ before the foundation of the world; see the note on *Rom.* viii. 8.

For he that cometh to God] To the throne of his grace, to pray unto him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and assistance; to the house of God, to worship, and serve him, and in order to enjoy his presence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be spiritual, and with the heart; and supposes spiritual life; and must be through Christ, and by faith: wherefore such a comer to God,

Must believe that he is] Or *exists*, as the Arabic version; and he must not barely believe his existence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he must believe in the three persons in the God-head; that the first person is the Father of Christ; that the second person is both the Son of God and Mediator; and that the third person is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto through Christ the Mediator, by the guidance and assistance of the Spirit: and he must believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniscient, and knows his person and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all-sufficient, and that his grace is sufficient for him; that he is immutable in his purposes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promises; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he must believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant-God and Father in Christ: and that he is

A rewarder of them that diligently seek him] Who are such, as are first sought out by him; and who seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things else: and of such God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himself, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and at last with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

By faith Noah being warned of God] In the Greek text, Noah is called *Noe*, and so the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament call him; but Josephus calls him *Noes*; or, "having received an oracle from God;" in which he was admonished how to make an ark, as Moses was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle,

chap. viii. 5. This oracle or warning is extant in *Gen.* vi. 13—22. and it was

Of things not seen as yet] As the universal deluge; the building of an ark or ship, which was the first that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preservation in it, and the destruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of such a nature, delivered to Noah, and received by him, shews, that he was a favourite of God; that his faith rested in the word of God; and that it agreed with the apostle's definition of faith, *¶* 1.

Moved with fear] Not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a distrust of the salvation of himself and his family in the ark; but with an awful sense of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worshiped God, and which he discovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not arise from nature, but from grace; and is increased by the discoveries of divine love; and is consistent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he

Prepared an ark to the saving of his house] Immediately, and without delay, he set about the building of the ark, and made it exactly according to the pattern which was given him; and his end in it was to secure his family, himself and his wife, his three sons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would shortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was seen: and from hence it may be observed, that though God can save without means, yet, generally speaking, it is his will to save by them; and that, as God saved Noah and his family in the waters, so he can, and does, save his people in afflictions; and also, that true faith is attended with obedience.

By the which he condemned the world] The inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in case of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions seen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reprov'd and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, so he condemned their unbelief; see the note on *Matt.* xii. 41.

And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith] Not of the law, but of the righteousness of Christ, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as Abraham, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteousness done by him, but through the righteousness

righteousness of Christ received by faith, or thro' faith in Christ, the antitype of the ark.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

By faith Abraham, when he was called] The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "by faith he who was called Abraham;" but this call is not to be understood of his name; for though his first name, Abram, might be given him in the faith of his being a great man, and his second name Abraham, when he himself was a believer; yet this change was made some years after the call referred to; which is that in *Genesis* xii. 1. when he was called out of his own country, kindred and father's house; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and, as Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees, so they, from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not perish with idolaters, being chosen vessels, and for whom God has peculiar blessings in store: and so the grace of God is seen in calling them, without any respect to their deserts, as in calling Abraham: and the care and goodness of God may be observed, in raising up fit instruments to propagate his cause and interest. Now Abraham, being called

To go out into a place] From Ur of the Chaldees, to the land of Canaan;

Which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance] Not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity, unless after the resurrection, in the new-Jerusalem church-state, and which inheritance was typical of heaven;

Obedied] The divine call; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may be called the obedience of faith.

And he went out not knowing whither he went] For though he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came, *Gen.* xii. 5. yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only said, *Gen.* xii. 1. *unto a land that I will shew thee:* Aben Ezra, on *Gen.* xx. 13. "God caused me to wander, &c." says, the sense is, that "he went from place to place, and knew not whither he went:" all which agrees with our apostle:

VOL. V.

and from hence it may be observed, that God sometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property of faith to follow God when it cannot see its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This also shews, that Abraham's faith agrees with the apostle's definition of it, *x. 1.*

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise] The land of Canaan, so called, because it was promised to Abraham and his seed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promise and grace of God: here Abraham sojourned for a while,

As in a strange country] Which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; see *Acts* vii. 5. and an idolatrous one; here he sojourned by faith, believing that, as it was promised, it would be given to him and his seed: so all God's people are sojourners in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling-place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their stay in it, is but for a while; and, whilst they are in it, do not look upon themselves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are strangers to them; though they have a civil conversation with them, they separate from them, both as to profaneness and superstition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as Abraham also did.

Dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise] The same promised land, the same promised blessings, and the same promised seed, the Messiah; see *Gen.* xii. 3. and chap. xxvi. 3, 4. and xxviii. 13, 14. with these Abraham dwelt, for he lived until Isaac was seventy-five years of age, and Jacob fifteen; he was an hundred years old, when Isaac was born, *Gen.* xxi. 5. and he lived one hundred and seventy-five years, *Gen.* xxv. 7. and Isaac was sixty years old, when Jacob was born, *Genesis* xxv. 26. and Abraham dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleasure, and moved from place to place. So true believers, as they are Abraham's seed, they are heirs with him, according to the promise; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houses of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

Q

10 For

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations] Not the city of Jerusalem, nor the Gospel church-state; but either the city of the new Jerusalem, said to have twelve foundations, *Rev. xxii. 14.* and in which glorious state Abraham, with the rest of the saints, being raised from the dead, will in person possess the promised land; or else the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling-place of the saints, and will have in it many habitations; and which will be, both peaceable and safe, and full of glory, riches, joy and pleasure; and, into which, none but holy and righteous persons will enter; the *foundations* of which, are the everlasting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promise and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness; which shew the immoveableness of it, it being opposed to the tabernacles Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt in, and to the transitory enjoyments of this world: and for this sure, immoveable and comfortable state of things, Abraham was looking by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to spiritual things; he went through difficulties with cheerfulness, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with disdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earnest desire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, *ψ. 1.*

Whose builder and maker is God] God the Father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promised it before the world began, and has chosen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jesus Christ is the forerunner entered, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the possession of it: this shews the superior excellency of this city, or glorious state; and, that God has the sole right to dispose of it.

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Through faith also Sara herself] Some copies add "being barren;" and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; which is a circumstance which makes her faith appear the

greater: but it is a question, whether the apostle speaks of the faith of Sara, or of Abraham; some think, he speaks of Abraham's faith; and that it was through his faith that Sara conceived; and observe, that the last clause may be rendered, "because he judged him faithful," &c. and the rather, because the apostle, both before and after, is speaking of Abraham's faith, *ψ. 8, 9, 10, 17.* and in *ψ. 12.* mention is made only of one, even of Abraham; and in *Romans iv. 17.* only notice is taken of Abraham's faith, respecting this matter; nor is Sara's faith observed in the history of it, but her diffidence: but why may not Sara be joined with Abraham, in this commendation, as well as Isaac and Jacob? And though at first she distrusted, yet she afterwards feared, and believed: other women are mentioned in this catalogue of believers; and they share in the same grace and privileges, as men: and Sara, being a believer, as well as Abraham,

Received strength to conceive seed] Sometimes, *strength* itself signifies *seed*, as in *Prov. xxxi. 3.* and so to receive strength, is to receive seed; which the female does from the male: hence that saying of the Jews (*†*), "The male does not receive strength from another, but the female," מקבלה כח "receiveth strength from another:" but here it is to be understood of receiving power from God to retain seed, received from men, and conceive by it; which Sara, in her circumstances, without the interposition of the almighty power, could never have done. The nymph Anobret, is so called, in imitation of this conception of Sara's; or, as she is called in the Phœnician language, חן ענברת, which signifies "conceiving by grace;" as this conception must be entirely ascribed to the power and grace of God.

And was delivered of a child when she was past age] Of bearing and bringing forth children, being ninety years of age, *Gen. xvii. 17.* Now though the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of children, are things natural, ordinary, and common, yet here was a particular promise respecting this matter; and there were great difficulties in nature attending it, and such as to reason were insuperable; but these were got over, through the power and grace of God, and which is ascribed to faith in the faithfulness of a promising God.

Because she judged him faithful who had promised] That she should have a son at the time of life; (see the note on chapter x. 23.)

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars

(†) Caphtor, fol. 21, 2.

stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Therefore sprang there even of one] That is, Abraham: the Arabic version has here a strange interpolation; "This faith Isaac and Rebecca conceived in mind, and so there were born of one, Esau and Jacob."

And him as good as dead] Being an hundred years of age; see the note on *Romans* iv. 19. The Ethiopic version reads, "the bodies of both were like a dead carcass;" both of Abraham and Sara.

So many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable] As was promised to Abraham, *Gen.* xv. 5. and chap. xxii. 17. which has been fulfilled, *Isaiab* x. 22. and will still have a further fulfilment, *Hosea* i. 10.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

These all died in faith] Not all the seed of Abraham, but all the believers in the preceding verses, excepting Enoch; particularly the three patriarchs, with Sara; these died a corporal death, which is common to all, to the righteous and to the wicked: and yet saints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itself, which being once implanted can never be lost; and sometimes in the exercise of it, as these believers did: they died in the faith of their posterity's inheriting the land of Canaan, and in the faith of the promised Messiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory: and so to die, is comfortable to themselves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, desirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, "according to faith;" they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they professed, being the Lord's both living and dying.

Not having received the promises] The things promised, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, and the blessings of the Gospel-dispensation; they had the promises of these things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them.

But having seen them afar off] The things themselves in the promise; as Abraham saw the going forth of his posterity out of Egypt, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and saw the day

of Christ at a greater distance still, *Gen.* xv. 13, 14. *John* viii. 56.

And were persuaded of them, and embraced them] They had a full assurance of faith, that what was promised would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of possession of them beforehand, as Abraham did of the land of Canaan, by sojourning in it; as did also Isaac and Jacob; and all of them by faith embraced the Messiah, and dealt with and laid hold upon his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace, by which they were saved, as New Testament saints are.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth] For they sojourned in the land of Canaan, as in a strange land, as the saints do in this world; see *y.* 9. And they were pilgrims, travelling through this world to the heavenly country, and they confessed themselves to be such, *Gen.* xlvii. 9. nor are believers ashamed to own and confess their mean estate in this world; for it is only with respect to earth and earthly things that they are strangers and pilgrims, and only whilst they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time, that they are so; ere long they will be at home, and know as they are known.

14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

For they that say such things] That they are strangers and pilgrims on earth.

Declare plainly that they seek a country] Heaven, so called, for the largeness of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightness; a pleasant land, a land of rest, though a land afar off. Here the Father of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his people dwell: the Syriac version renders it, "their own city;" the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of *seeking* it, supposes some things with respect to the place where they were; as, that they were in a strange land, had no settlement there, nor satisfaction in it, and that they sat loose to the world, and the things of it; and some things respecting the country sought after, as that they were not in it; that it was at a distance from them; that they had some knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their desires were after it, and that they had a strong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteousness, nor birth-privileges, nor submission to outward ordinances, nor a mere profession of religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteousness which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, though not without holiness, nor without trouble. The right manner

of seeking it, is, in the first place, above all things else, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well-doing. Many are the reasons which may induce believers to seek it; it is their own and their Father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and because of the company they shall there enjoy, and the work they shall be employed in; and because of the happiness they will be possessed of; and because their inheritance, riches, and treasures lie here.

15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

And truly, if they had been mindful of that country] Chaldea, which was Abraham's country.

From whence they came out] As Abraham and Sara did in person, and their posterity in them.

They might have had opportunity to have returned] For the way from Canaan, or Egypt, where they sojourned, was short and easy: and though Abraham sent his servant thither to take a wife for his son Isaac, yet he would not go thither himself, nor suffer his son; nay, made his servant swear that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman should refuse to come; so unmindful was he of that country; so little did he regard it; yea, so much did he despise it: so when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of sin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkness, and of the shadow of death; a desert, a mere wilderness; a country where Satan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their first birth: and they may be said to come out of it, not in a natural and civil sense, but in a spiritual one; and it is the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is separated from it, to be unmindful of it; not so as not to consider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor so as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor so as not to pray for the conversion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmindful of it, so as to be desirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections set upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleasures of it, or so as to desire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reason: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to set a gracious mind against it: a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a christian to mind the world; and besides, worldly-mindedness is attended with bad consequences. More-

over, though the saints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are seeking is afar off; many things in it are alluring and ensnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and Satan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; some that bear the name of christians, but are not truly such, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may strangely go back again in some instances; but they shall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Christ, and are secured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Christ in effectual vocation, who will keep them; they are of the household of God, and shall be no more foreigners; should they return in such sense, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

But now they desire a better country] Which is not to be understood of the then present time, in which the apostle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he speaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven: and though there are indeed in heaven desires after perfect happiness, in soul and body; yet this intends the desires of these saints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the present state of things; who, as the patriarchs, desired a better country than Chaldea, or even Canaan itself; so they desire a better country than this world, and such is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and pestilential vapours, no mists or fogs beclouding, no storms and tempests, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the blessed Spirit; here is no heat of persecution, nor coldness, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of most delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirst; and here are riches, which are solid, satisfying, durable, safe and sure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here is a freedom from a body subject to diseases and death, from a body of sin and death, from Satan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and unbelief, and from all sorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the spirits of just men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Christ in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained,

That

That is, an heavenly] An inheritance in heaven, an house eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it should be desired by such who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement desire; and it is such, that the saints desire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which shews that they are weaned from this, and have seen something glorious in another. Remarkable is the saying of Anaxagoras (*u*), who, when one said to him, "Hast thou no regard to thy country?" answered, "I have, and that the greatest, pointing with his fingers towards heaven." And, says Philo the Jew (*w*), "The soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place."

Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God] Their covenant God and Father; see the note on chapter viii. 10. even though he is the God of the whole earth.

For he hath prepared for them a city] In his council and covenant, and by his Son; see the note on *y*. 10. This proves, that he is not ashamed of the relation he stands in to them, since he has made a provision for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

By faith Abraham, when he was tried] Or tempted; that is, by God, *Gen. xxii. 1.* This temptation or trial respects the command given by God to Abraham, to offer up his son Isaac; which lays no foundation for a charge against God, either of sin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of justice and goodness, and whatever he requires is just and good: and though his creatures are bound by the laws he prescribes them, he himself is not. Besides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preserver of it; and he has a right to dispose of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means and instruments he thinks fit: to which may be added, that the secret will of God was not that Isaac should die, but a command was given to Abraham to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love: this was a temptation of probation, not of seduction, or to sin, as are the temptations of Satan; for God tempts no man with sin. The Jews speak (*x*) of temptations, with which Abraham was tried, and in all which

he stood; and say, that this of the binding of Isaac was the tenth and last.

Offered up Isaac] He shewed great readiness to do it; as soon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it on his son; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to slay his son; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it, and bound his son, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and stretched forth his hand to slay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, justice and wisdom of the divine command; he was fully assured of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, however contrary this might seem thereunto; and he was strongly persuaded of the power of accomplishing them in some way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows:

And he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son] He had a promise made him that he should have a son, and that a numerous issue should spring from him, which should inherit the land of Canaan; yea, that the Messiah himself should be of his seed: and he had received these promises; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reason to do, since the first was fulfilled, the son was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed: every thing was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whose blood is not to be shed by man: a child of his own, a part of himself; a son, an own son; an only-begotten son; a son whom he loved; an Isaac, "a son of joy;" a son of promise; and his heir, the son of his old age, and who was now a grown-up person. The Jews are divided about the age of Isaac at his binding; Josephus (*y*) says he was twenty-five years of age; others say twenty-six (*z*); some say (*a*) thirty-six: but the more prevailing opinion is (*b*), that he was thirty-seven years of age; only Aben Ezra (*c*) makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood.

Some

(*u*) Laert. in Vit. Anaxag. p. 92. (*w*) De Agricultura, p. 196. Vid. ib. de Confus. Ling. p. 339. (*x*) Targum in Cant. vii. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. & c. 31. Maimon, Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Abot. c. 5. §. 3.

(*y*) Antiq. l. 1. c. 13. §. 2. (*z*) Tzemach David, par. 7. fol. 6. 1. (*a*) Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1. (*b*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieros. in Exod. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Juchasin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalheket Hakabala, fol. 3. 1. (*c*) In Gen. xxii. 4.

Some christian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Christ when he suffered, of whom he was a type.

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called :

Of whom it is said] That is, of Isaac, Abraham's own son, whom he offered up ; or rather, " to whom it was said," as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it ; that is, to Abraham, for to him was this said, *Gen. xxi. 12.*

That in Isaac shall thy seed be called] That numerous natural seed of his, which should inherit the land of Canaan ; and his special famous seed the Messiah, to whom the promises were made ; see the note on *Rom. ix. 7.*

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead] Abraham did not go about this affair without thought ; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood ; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith ; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead ; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb ; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise up his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail ; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God.

From whence also he received him in a figure] Or " for an example of faith and obedience ;" or for " a parable or proverb ;" that such a proverbial expression might be made use of for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in *Genesis xxii. 14.* or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this ; as in his birth ; and the circumstances of it ; he was long promised and expected, as Christ was ; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy ; he was circumcised the eighth day ; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast ; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy : and he was a figure of him in his oblation ; they were both sons of Abraham ; both only-begotten and be-

loved sons ; both heirs ; both carried the wood on which they were offered ; both were offered on a mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared ; and both by the command of God : and alone, none were with them : and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance ; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken : not Isaac, but the ram was slain ; not the divine, but the human nature suffered : both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death ; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection ; it was as life from the dead ; it was like the return of the prodigal, *Luke xv. 32.* Abraham looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man ; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The Jews speak of this matter agreeable to the apostle ; אחרוב כמות " he was accounted as dead," they speak of him, כאלו " as if he was at the point of giving up " the ghost." So that a Jew cannot find fault with the apostle for expressing himself in this manner.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau] The history of this is in *Genesis xxvii. 33—39.* The former of these was a good man, and though the youngest son, he is set before, and was blessed before the eldest ; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a blessing ; for temporal blessings are enjoyed in common : and this blessing was prophetic, it was

Concerning things to come] Jacob's blessing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be signified the dews of divine grace, the fatness of God's house, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true Israelites partake of ; also dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accomplishment in his posterity ; and may be expressive of the spiritual reign of the saints, and their dominion, by grace : and of the kingdom that shall hereafter be put into their hands ; and of the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom in the latter day, who was to spring from him. Esau's blessings were merely temporal ones, and respected things future, which were fulfilled in his posterity ; and these several blessings Isaac pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be bestowed on them ; and so his faith answered to the account of faith in *ψ. 1.* It may be asked how Isaac can be said to have blessed Jacob by faith, when he was deceived by

by him? It is certain he took him to be Esau, when he blessed him, wherefore it was not the design of Isaac, though it was the will of God, that he should bless him, *Gen. xxvii. 18—30.* but yet notwithstanding this, Isaac might do it in faith, believing that the person he blessed, would be blessed, though he was mistaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, *ψ. 33, 37.* to which the apostle may have respect; and besides, he blessed him after this, *Gen. xxviii. 1, 2, 3.*

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning upon the top of his staff.*

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying] Which was the usual time of blessing with the patriarchs; and the reason of it was, that what was said might be more attended to and regarded, and more strongly impressed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done *in faith* by Jacob, when there was no appearance of the fulfilment of these things, and it was not likely that he should see them; and this shews the truth of what the apostle says in *ψ. 1, 13.*

Blessed both the sons of Joseph] Whose names were Ephraim and Manasseh; the form of blessing them is recorded in *Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.* and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his setting Ephraim before Manasseh, *ψ. 13, 14, 17, 18, 19.* and when he delivered the blessing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, though they were then in a strange land.

And worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff] Not that "he worshipped the top of his staff," as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, either his own, or Joseph's, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an instance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the scope of the apostle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worship and respect paid to Joseph, as a fulfilment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Christ, of whom Joseph was a type; whereas, on the contrary, Joseph at this time bowed to his father, as was most natural and proper, *Gen. xlviii. 12.* nor is there any necessity of supposing a different punctuation of *Gen. xlvii. 31.* and that the true reading is not *Mittab*, a bed, but *Matteh*, a staff; contrary to all the Targums (*d*), and the Talmud (*e*), which read *Mittab*, a bed; seeing it is not that place the apostle cites or refers to;

for that was before the blessing of the sons of Joseph, but this was at the same time; and the apostle relates what is nowhere recorded in *Genesis*, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or else he concludes it from the general account in *Genesis* xlviii. and the sense is, "that Jacob having blessed the two sons of Joseph, being fat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his staff, and worshipped God, and gave praise and glory to him, that he had lived to see, not only his son Joseph, but his seed also." See *Gen. xlviii. 2, 11, 20.*

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

By faith Joseph, when he died] The riches and honours of Joseph, as they could not secure him from death, so they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneasy about it; nor did his prosperity make him proud, or above speaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promises, nor weaken his faith in them; which is here commended in the following instances: as that at the time of his death, he

Made mention of the departing of the children of Israel] That is, out of the land of Egypt: he remembered it himself, and put his brethren in mind of it, by speaking of it to their comfort, with great assurance; he knew they were well situated in the land of Egypt, and yet speaks of their departure out of it: he foresaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and visit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of Canaan; all which shews the strength of his faith, and that it was about things not seen.

And gave commandment concerning his bones] And the command was a very strict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body; which shews, that he believed their departure out of Egypt was at a great distance, when his flesh would be consumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred after his death; it respects the carrying them out of Egypt with them, and burying them in the land of Canaan, when they came there; and this is an instance of his humility, in choosing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in Egypt; and of his care to prevent idolatry, which

he

1 (*d*) Onkelos, Jonathan, & Jerusalem in *Gen. xlvii. 31.*

(*e*) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16, 2.

he might observe the Egyptians would be prone unto: and this command was a great instance of Joseph's faith, that the children of Israel would return to Canaan, and which might serve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it also shews his belief of the resurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, signified by the land of Canaan; see *Genesis* l. 24, 25. the Papists, from hence, plead for the reliques of saints; but it should be observed, that it was at the request, and by the command of Joseph, that his bones were preserved, which is not the case of the saints, whose reliques are pleaded for; besides, these were the true and real bones of Joseph, whereas the reliques of the saints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of Joseph were ordered to be buried, not to be shewed for a sight, much less worshipped, as popish reliques are. Joseph's coffin, the Jews say (*f*), was put into the river Nile; and so says Patricides (*g*), an Arabic writer: others say, it was in the burying-place of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by Moses.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

By faith Moses, when he was born] Which is to be understood, not of the faith of Moses, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when Pharaoh had published an edict, ordering every male child to be cast into the river, but instead of obeying this order, Moses

Was hid three months of his parents] That is, in his father's house, as it is said in *Acts* vii. 20. and is here expressed in the Ethiopic version. According to the Targumist (*b*), his mother went with him but six months, at the end of which he was born, and that she hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman usually goes with child; and after that she could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here ascribed to both his parents, though in *Exodus* ii. 2. it is represented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and consent of his father; and the Septuagint there renders it, *ἐκρύβοντες*, "they hid him;" though the order of the history makes it necessary, that it should be

read in the singular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and persons may lawfully hide themselves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their safety; and this was so far from being wrong in the parents of Moses, that it is commended as an instance of faith: they believed the promise in general, that God would deliver the people of Israel; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had some intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer.

Because they saw he was a proper child] Not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and acceptable to God; they perceived something remarkable in him, which to them was a token, that he would be the deliverer of God's people, and therefore they hid him; see the note on *Acts* vii. 20.

And they were not afraid of the king's commandment] Nor did they observe it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promise of God's multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldness in faith; and though faith may be weakened, it cannot be lost; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for though they feared not at first, they seem to be afraid afterwards; but when God designs to work deliverance, nothing shall prevent.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

By faith Moses, when he was come to years] Or "was great;" a nobleman in Pharaoh's court; or when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; or rather, when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, *Acts* vii. 22, 23.

Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter] By whom Moses was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; she reckoned him as her own son, and designed him for Pharaoh's successor, as Josephus reports (*i*): he refused all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be *called*, often signifies only to *be*; and by taking part with the Israelites, and against the Egyptians, he plainly declared that his descent was from the former, and not the latter: and this discovered great faith; and shewed, that he preferred being called an Israelite to any earthly

(*f*) T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1.
Oriental. l. 1. c. 2. p. 379.
Exod. li. 2.

(*g*) Apud Hottinger. Smegma
(*b*) Jonathan Ben Uzziel in

(*i*) Antiq. l. 2. c. 9. §. 7.

earthly adoption; and the care of the church and people of God, to his own worldly honour and interest; and that he believed the promises of God, before the flatteries of a court; and esteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his sake, better than sinful pleasures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of Pharaoh's daughter, see the note on *Acts* vii. 21.

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God] The Israelites, who were God's chosen and peculiar people, and were the true worshippers of him; Moses chose to be with those: the company and conversation of such is most eligible to every good man, because God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large provisions of grace in the midst of them; so that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them; and is attended with comfort, peace, and satisfaction: but then those are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the sake of God and Christ, and the truths which they profess, and the worship and service they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now Moses chose to suffer these with them, to suffer the same afflictions they did, and to sympathise with them: and this was more eligible to him,

Than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season] Meaning, either the pleasures, honours, and riches in Pharaoh's court, attended with sin; as indulging himself in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in distress; approving Pharaoh's cruelty and persecution, at least conniving at it, and not opposing it, which could not be without sin; carrying himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when he was an Hebrew; and preferring his own ease to the deliverance of his people; and now these, had he continued at court, would have been but for a short season: or else sinful lusts in general are intended, in which men promise themselves much pleasure, when it is only imaginary, and lasts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the Jews call (הנאות רגעי), "pleasures for a moment," or momentary ones. And the reasons which might induce Moses, and so every good man, to such a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themselves, which are such that God has chosen for them, and ap-

pointed them unto, and which he gives them to suffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and issue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of sinful pleasures; there is no solidity, nor satisfaction, in the best of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleasure in sin: there is always bitterness in the end, and it issues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith Moses made this choice, for it is manifestly contrary to flesh and blood; it shewed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin; and that he looked beyond the things of sense and time, to those of eternity.

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Esteeming the reproach of Christ] That is, either Christ personal: meaning not any reproach that lay upon Christ, as the immediate object of it; nor upon the people of Israel for the delay of his coming; but rather, for the sake of Christ: Christ was made known to the Old Testament saints, and they believed in him; he was typified by sacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his sake, for the sacrifices they offered, and for the worship they performed, for their faith in the Messiah, and their expectation of him. Or this may be understood of Christ mystical, the church; called *Christ*, because of the union, communion, sympathy, and likeness there is between them; inasmuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the saints are reproached, Christ himself is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature should be bore willingly, cheerfully, courageously, patiently, and constantly: and such Moses reckoned

Greater riches than the treasures in Egypt] He counted reproach itself riches: that is, he esteemed that as riches, for which he was reproached; as Christ, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the saints in them; all which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, are more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, or than the treasures in Egypt, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, through the seven years famine in it, *Gen.* xlvii. 14, 17, 20. and for which immense treasure, treasure-cities were built, *Exod.* i. 11. which would have become Moses's, had he been Pharaoh's successor, to which he bid fair, before he discovered himself.

(k) *Aben Ezra* in *Psal.* xxiii. 4.

For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward] By which is meant, either the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage, which he judged a sufficient recompence for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the apostle Paul did for the elect's sake, for the sake of Christ's body the church, *Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10.* or the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, promised for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham; or the enjoyment of God's presence among his people, who is their shield, and exceeding great reward: or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had respect unto, looked for, and believed he should enjoy: so that his faith was of things unseen; and this caused him to prefer even afflictions with the saints, and reproaches for Christ, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

By faith he forsook Egypt] Either when he fled to Midian; this was before the eating of the passover, and so it stands in its proper order; whereas, his going out of Egypt with the children of Israel was after it, and mentioned in *Ex. 29.* The word, *forsook*, implies fleeing; and then it was, when Pharaoh's wrath was kindled against him: but it may be said, that Moses seemed then to be afraid of it, seeing he fled: to which it may be answered; That he shewed great courage and intrepidity, in slaying the Egyptian; and he took no methods to gain the king's favour, when the thing was known: his fleeing was consistent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure shewed, that he would not desist from the work he was called unto; but that he waited God's time, when he should be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanness in Midian, and waited, patiently, till God should call him again to service: or this is to be understood of the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were seated and settled in the land of Egypt; they knew nothing of Canaan, nor of the way to it; and, besides, that was in the possession of others; they were a very morose, impatient, stiff-necked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderness, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of Pharaoh, and the Egyptians. The Israelites were in the midst of them; he brought them out from

among them, with the spoil of them in their hands: he knew the changeableness and fury of Pharaoh's mind, and yet he led them out, and left Egypt,

Not fearing the wrath of the king] Of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; though it was as the roaring of a lion: so such as are called by grace, from a state of darkness and bondage, and out of a strange land, forsake this world, and leave their situation in it, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the company of wicked men, and every thing that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Christ; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world.

For he endured] Afflictions, reproach and menace, with patience and courage; his mind was not broken with them, nor overborn by them; he expected divine help, and persevered; and so do such, who are called by the grace of God.

As seeing him who is invisible] That is, God, as the Syriac version expresses it; who is not to be seen corporally, though intellectually; not in his essence, though in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, though mediately in and through Christ; not perfectly now, though face to face hereafter. Moses saw him visionally, and symbolically in the bush; he saw him by faith, and with the eyes of his understanding; and so believing in his power, faithfulness, &c. did what he did.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

Through faith he kept the passover] Which Moses made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and caused the people of Israel to observe it; and which he did, in faith of the speedy deliverance of the children of Israel from the house of bondage; and in the faith of the Messiah, of whom the passover was a type; see the note on *1 Cor. v. 7.* The Syriac version reads, "Through faith they kept the passover;" that is, the Israelites.

And the sprinkling of blood] Of the paschal lamb; which was received into a bason, and was sprinkled upon the lintel, and two side-posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it.

Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them] For the Lord, seeing the blood sprinkled, as above, when he smote the first-born in Egypt, passed by the houses of the Israelites, so distinguished; and

and they were all safe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon the hearts and consciences of his people, whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by Jehovah, so that justice passes by them; and they are all safe and secure, and will be, when others are destroyed; nor can they be hurt by the second death.

29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land] Not through a river, but through the sea, the Red sea, the sea of Suph, or weeds; see the note on *Acts* vii. 36. Some say, they came out on the same side, they went in; but, it should seem rather, by the phrase here used, that they passed through it, from one side to the other; and that all one as if it had been on dry ground; even Moses, and all the children of Israel: and this they did by faith, believing that God would make a passage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were closely pursuing them.

Which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned] These were Pharaoh and his numerous army; who, observing the Israelites march on through the sea, as on dry land, thought they could do the same; and so made an attempt, but were every one of them drowned; in just retaliation for the cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the Israelites, as soon as born.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down] Of themselves, not from any natural cause: the Jews say (*n*), they sunk right down into the ground, and were swallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the Septuagint version in *Joshua* vi. 20. expresses it: or, it may be only that which was over-against the camp of Israel, as Kimchi observes; since Rahab's house was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of Joshua and the Israelites, who believed the walls would fall at the sound of the rams-horns, as God said they should.

After they were compassed about seven days] Which was a trial of their faith and patience: the Jews say (*o*), it was on the sabbath-day, that they fell:

this was a preternatural act, and cannot be ascribed to any second cause; nothing is impossible with God; no defences, ever so strong, are any thing against him; unlikely means are sometimes made use of by him; faith sticks at nothing, when it has the Word of God to rest upon; and what God does, he does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardness, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the conversion and subjection of them unto Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; which, in the eyes of men, is as mean and despicable, and as unlikely to bring about such an event, as the sounding of the rams-horns might be to the inhabitants of Jericho: and, it may be also an emblem of the fall of Babylon, and other antichristian cities, *Rev.* xvi. 19.

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

By faith the harlot Rahab] The Targum on *Joshua* ii. 1. calls her *אִשָּׁה מְדֻלָּלִים* "a woman that kept a victualling house:" this paraphrase is taken notice of by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place, who interpret it, "a feller of food:" and even the Hebrew word *זונה* is so explained by a considerable Jewish writer (*p*); and this may rather seem to be the sense of the word, and to be her proper business, from the spies going to her house, as being an house of entertainment; and from Salmon's marrying her, which might be thought strange, that a prince of Israel would, had she been a person of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her, for her faith and works, both by our apostle, and by James: but yet, the constant use of the word, in this form, the testimonies of two apostles, and her making no mention of her husband and children, when she agreed with the spies, confirm the generally received character of her, that she was an harlot. Some Jewish writers say (*q*), that she was ten years of age, when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and, that all the forty years they were in the wilderness, *זונה* "she played the harlot;" and was one and fifty years of age, when she was proselyted. She is called an *harlot*; not with respect to her present, but past life. In the Greek text she is here called *Raah*, as also in *James* ii. 25. and so in the Septuagint in *Joshua* ii. 1. and chap. i. 5. *Rahab*, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word

(*n*) Targum Jon. Jarchi & Kimchi in *Josh.* vi. 5.

(*o*) Jarchi

& Kimchi in ver. 15.

(*p*) R. Sol. Urbin. *Ohel Moed*, fol. 24. 1.

(*q*) T. Bab.

Zebachin, fol. 116. 2. *Shulhalet Hakabala*, fol. 7. 2.

word רַחַב *Joshua* ii. 2. and by Josephus (*r*) *Rachabe*. This woman was a wonderful and singular instance of the free, sovereign, distinguishing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one that sprung from Canaan, and was of the nations that were abhorred; but being called by grace, became an eminent believer: she believed, that the God of the Israelites, was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of Canaan to them; she received the spies and hid them through that faith; she caused them to swear by the Lord, that they would shew mercy to her and her family: and gave credit to them; and observed their instructions: and so she

Perished not with them that believed not] The inhabitants of Jericho, who were unbelievers, and disobedient, and all perished by the sword: but Rahab *perished not*, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal salvation, was an emblem and type of her spiritual salvation; her receiving the spies, was an emblem of a soul's receiving the Gospel, and the ministers of it; the scarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which, sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and the saving of her whole family, is an emblem of the compleat salvation of all the elect, soul and body, by Christ.

When she had received the spies with peace] And had hid them for some time in her house, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city saved her and hers, according to their promise and oath: the number of these spies were two, according to *Joshua* ii. 1. The Jews (*s*) say, one of them, was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest; and others (*t*) of them say, they were Phinehas and Caleb.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

And what shall I more say?] Intimating he had said enough, to prove the definition of *faith*, he had given; and that the elders by it had obtained a good report; and yet he had not said all he could; and that he had so much to say, that he could not say all.

For the time would fail me] Either the time of life, and so it is an hyperbolical expression; or the time convenient for the writing this epistle; to enumerate all the instances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his

time, and make the epistle prolix and tedious: this form of speech is often used by Philo the Jew (*u*), and by Julian the emperor (*w*). It may be observed, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not stand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Testament, was very large.

To tell of Gideon] So Gideon is called in the Septuagint version of *Judges* vi. 11. and other places; and by Josephus (*x*), and Philo (*y*) the Jew, as here: he was a man of but a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and, even in the exercise of that particular grace for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in ascribing former mercies and present afflictions to the Lord; in destroying the altar of Baal; in crediting the word of the Lord, that Israel should be saved by him; which he shewed by the preparation he made, and in marching, against a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be seen in the book of *Judges*, chapters vi, vii, and viii.

And of Barak] Who was before Gideon, as Jephthah was before Samson, and Samuel before David; for the apostle does not observe strict order, reciting these in haste. Barak, when the word of the Lord came to him, shewed some diffidence, yet acted in obedience to it, under the sole direction and counsel of a woman; he engaged Sisera's vast army with a small number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, *Judges* iv. and v.

And of Samson] Who was a child of promise, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great strength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the last act of his life seems to be a great instance of faith; he did it, with calling upon the Lord; he was strengthened for it by the Lord; he acted, not as a private person, but as the judge of Israel; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to destroy himself, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Christ.

And of Jephthah] The Syriac version calls him *Nepthe*, and the Arabic version *Naphthah*; he was base born; and, for a time, joined himself to vain men, but became a believer; and is remarked for his faith, in ascribing the conquests of Israel in the wilderness to the Lord; in fighting with

(*r*) *Antiq. l. 5. c. 1. §. 2.*

(*s*) *Tanchuma apud Masora in lib.*

(*t*) *Laniado in Josh. ii. 1.*

(*u*) *De Creat. Princip. p. 735. Merced. Meret. p. 863. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1037. De Somniis, p. 1216.*

(*w*) *Orat. I. p. 50, 62, 75.*

(*x*) *Antiq. Jud. l. 5. c. 6. §. 2. &c.*

(*y*) *De Confusione Ling. p. 339.*

with the Ammonites, whom he conquered; and in his conscientiousness in observing his vow, *Judges xi.*

Of David also] A man after God's own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; whose faith appeared in his dependence on God, when he fought with Goliath; in encouraging himself in the Lord his God, when in exile and distress; and in believing his interest in the covenant of grace, when his house and family were in a disagreeable situation, and he just going out of the world.

And Samuel] A child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who ministered to him when a child; was always read to hearken to his voice; was used very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightness all his days; and had a good report of God and man.

And of the prophets] From Samuel to John the Baptist, who were famous for their trust in God, their faith in the Messiah, and for their honourable walk and conversation.

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Who through faith subdued kingdoms] As David did particularly; who subdued Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom, and the Philistines, 2 Sam. viii. 12, 14. War, in some cases, is lawful; and kingdoms may be subdued; and faith makes use of means to do it: these kingdoms, tho' subdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reason to be afraid of kings or kingdoms; and this should encourage the saints in their combats with the powers of darkness.

Wrought righteousness] Exercised vindictive justice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God and his people; civil righteousness, in the discharge of their offices; and moral righteousness, in their conversation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not justifying: wherefore they stood in need of another, and better righteousness, which is perfect and durable; and, in consequence of which being known, embraced and received, men work righteousness: it may be observed, that to do works of righteousness in faith, and by it, is something very considerable; it is reckoned here among actions of the greatest fame; and, that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteousness; and that righteousness is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteousness; and that the righteousness of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives.

Obtained promises] The promise of the land of Canaan; particular promises of victory over their enemies; promises concerning the Messiah, and of everlasting life and happiness: their faith was not the cause of promises being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace by which these believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accomplishment of them; and, in some sense, enjoyed the things promised beforehand; their faith realizing things future and invisible to them: to obtain a promise from God, is a great and marvellous thing; it is an instance of rich grace; and there is never a promise, but what is great in itself, and precious to the saints: all God's promises are obtained; they are sure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and business of faith to receive, and enjoy them.

Stopped the mouths of lions] A lion was slain by Sampson, and another by David; but the most remarkable instance of stopping the mouths of lions, was in the den into which Daniel was cast; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midst of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, Satan.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Quenched the violence of fire] Which may be said to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as Lot from Sodom, when God rained fire and brimstone on it; when, by prayer, it is stopped, as by Moses at Taberah, Numb. xi. 1, 2. when persons are not hurt by it, as Shadarach, Meshach, and Abednego, when cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: so believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not consumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of Satan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every state and case; and shall not be hurt of the second death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

Escaped the edge of the sword] And were not destroyed by it; as Lot, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

Out of weakness were made strong] Being recovered from bodily diseases, as David, Hezekiah, &c. by an increase of bodily strength, as Samson; by being filled with courage and strength of mind, when before timorous, as Barak, &c. so believers, when

when they have been weak in the exercise of grace, have been made strong.

Waxed valiant in fight] As Barak, Gideon, David, &c. so believers, in the spiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cause, and under a good captain; being well provided with armour, and assured of victory, and a crown.

Turned to fight the armies of the aliens] Such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others; who, were put to flight by Joshua, the Judges, David, and others.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

Women received their dead raised to life again] As the widow of Sarepta, and the Shunamite, 1 Kings xvii. 22. 2 Kings iv. 34, 35. Their sons were really dead, and they received them alive again, from the hands of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in the way of a resurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets.

And others were tortured] Racked, or tympanized; referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus, recorded in 2 Macc. vii. as appears, from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the resurrection: for it follows,

Not accepting deliverance] When offered by the king, 2 Macc. vii. 24, 25.

That they might obtain a better resurrection] Which they died in the faith of, 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14. The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection, than mere metaphorical and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called *deaths*; or real ones, which were only to a mortal state, and in order to die again, as those under the Old Testament, and under the New, before the resurrection of Christ; or than the resurrection of the wicked: for the resurrection the saints will obtain, will be first, at the beginning of the thousand years; the wicked will not live, till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Christ, whereas, the wicked will be raised, merely by virtue of his power; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual, the wicked with base, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous ones; the righteous will come forth to

the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of damnation. The consideration of the better resurrection, is of great use to strengthen faith under sufferings for righteousness sake, and this is obtained by suffering; not that suffering is the meritorious cause of it, but saints in this way come to it; it is promised to such, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by such; for all that live godly, do, and must suffer persecution in one way or another.

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

And others had trial of cruel mockings] As Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children whom the bears devoured; Jeremiah by Pashur, and others; the Jews by Sanballat and Tobiah, when rebuilding the temple; the prophets, whom God sent to the Jews as his messengers, Judges xvi. 25—28. 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. Jer. xx. 7, 8. Nehem. iv. 1—6. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

And scourgings] Or smittings, as Jeremiah and Micajah, Jer. xx. 2. 2 Chron. xviii. 23, 24.

Yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments] As Joseph, Samson, and Jeremy, Gen. xxxix. 20. Judges xvi. 21. Jer. xx. 2. and chap. xxxvii. 15. Now of these things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

They were stoned] As Naboth, by the order of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 13—19. Zachariah in the court of the Lord's house: 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. and the character of Jerusalem is, that she *stoned* the prophets that were sent unto her, Matt. xxiii. 37.

They were sawn asunder] To which there seems to be an allusion in Matt. xxiv. 51. There is no instance of any good men being so used in scripture: perhaps reference is had to some that suffered thus in the time of Antiochus. The Jews have a tradition, that the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, and by his order; which some think the apostle refers unto; though it seems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. It is become a generally received opinion of the ancient christian writers, that Isaiah was
sawn

fawn asunder; as of Justin Martyr (c), Origen (d), Tertullian (e), Lactantius (f), Athanasius (g), Hilary (h), Cyril of Jerusalem (i), Gregory Nyssene (k), Jerom (l), Isidorus Pelusiota (m), Gregentius (n), Procopius Gazæus (o), and others; but more persons seem to be designed.

Were tempted] Either by God, as Abraham and Job; or by the devil, as all the saints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worship of God, as Eleazar, and the seven brethren with their mother; at least some of them were, *Macc.* vi. and vii. Some think the true reading is *ἐμψύχων*, "were burned," as one of the seven brethren were, *2 Macc.* vii. 5. and as Zedekiah and Ahab were roasted in the fire by the king of Babylon, *Jer.* xxix. 22. though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; see *Dan.* xi. 33. This clause is wanting in the Syriac version.

Were slain with the sword] As the priests at Nob, by the order of Saul, *1 Sam.* xxii. 18, 19. the prophets of the Lord by Jezabel, *1 Kings* xviii. 23. and chap. xix. 10. and many in the times of the Maccabees; *Dan.* xi. 33. *2 Macc.* v. 14.

They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins] With the wool or hair upon them; and with such Elijah and Elisha might be arrayed; since the former is said to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as John the Baptist was, who came in his spirit and power, and also in his form; and the latter wore the mantle of the other; *2 Kings* i. 8. and chap. ii. 8, 14. and to these reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, because of those who sought their lives; and was the case of others who were forced, by reason of persecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and some clothed themselves in this manner, to shew their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, because they could get no other raiment.

Being destitute] Of bodily food, as Elijah, who was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Sarepta; *1 Kings* xvii. 6—15.

Afflicted] Pressed, drove to the greatest straits, despairing of life, and weary of it, as the same prophet, *1 Kings* xix. 4—10.

Tormented] Or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, persecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

(Of whom the world was not worthy)] These words are inserted in a parenthesis, to remove or prevent such objections as these; that they were restless and unquiet persons, that made disturbances in the world, and so unfit to live in it; and that they were deservedly punished for crimes they were guilty of; and to shew the great worth and inestimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of punishment to it.

They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth] As Elijah did; *1 Kings* xviii. 4. and chap. xix. 9, 10. and many in the times of the Maccabees; *2 Macc.* x. 6.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith] This may either be limited to the sufferers in the preceding verses, who were martyred, or suffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendered; and who are called martyrs or witnesses, in chapter xii. 1. and so the Ethiopic version renders the clause, "and all these were witnesses concerning the faith:" or it may be extended to all the instances of faith throughout the chapter; and so the apostle reasserts what he had said, *y.* 2. having proved it by a variety of examples; see the note there.

Received not the promise] Not that they did not receive the promise of the land of Canaan, for so did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, &c. nor that they did not receive the promise of deliverance and victory, for so did Joshua, the Judges, and others; or that they did not receive the promise of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promise of the Messiah, that is, the Messiah promised: for they had the promise, but not the thing; who is called *the promise*, emphatically, because he is the first and grand promise; and because in him all the promises center, and are yea and amen: him the Old Testament saints received not; they greatly desired to see him in the flesh; they saw him by faith; they believed

in

(c) Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 249. (d) In Jer. Homil. 19. p. 192. in l. Homil. 1. fol. 101. & in Matt. Homil. 26. fol. 51.

(e) De Patientia, c. 14. Scorpiace, c. 8. (f) De vera sapientia, l. 4. c. 11. (g) Vol. 1. de Incarnat. p. 55, 65. Vol. II. dicta & Interpret. Parab. p. 325, 353.

(h) Contr. Constant. p. 199. & enarrat. in Pl. cxviii. p. 465.

(i) Catech. 2. §. 9. p. 29. & Catech. 13. §. 3. p. 169.

(k) Vol. II. de Castigat. p. 749. (l) In l. l. vii. 2.

(m) L. 4. Ep. 205. (n) Disputat. cum Herbaso Judæo, p. 19.

(o) In Reg. l. 4. c. 21, 16.

in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now since these saints so strongly believed, and so cheerfully suffered before Christ came; the apostle's argument is, that much more should the saints now, since Christ is come, and the promises received, go on believing in him, and readily suffering for his sake; see chapter xii. 1-4.

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

God having provided some better thing for us] Not a better state of the church, in such respect, as to be free from suffering reproach and persecutions; for this is the case of saints under the New Testament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the soul after death; nor any greater degree of happiness in the other world; nor the perfection of blessedness in soul and body; things common to all believers; but Christ, as now exhibited in the flesh: Jesus Christ was the same in the yesterday of the Old Testament, as he is in the present day of the Gospel-dispensation; he was slain from the foundation of the world; and the saints then were saved as now, by his grace and righteousness: only with this difference between them and us; they had Christ in the promise, we have him himself that was promised; they had him in type and shadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were saved by Christ, who was to come; we believe in him, and are saved by him, as being come. Hence our case is, with respect to these circumstances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better administration of the covenant of grace; we have a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice; the Gospel is dispensed in a better manner, more clearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governors, and were under a spirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdensome rites, as well as of its curse and condemnation; and have the spirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has *provided* for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God's determination, designation, and appointment of Christ, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; and has respect to the nature and circumstances of his death, which were fixed in the purposes of God; as well as the time of his coming into the world, and the season of his death; and in all this God has shewn his great goodness, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is.

That they without us should not be made perfect] The Old Testament saints are perfectly justified, perfectly sanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Christ, and through his sacrifice, blood and righteousness; and so were not made perfect without us; since their sins and ours are expiated together by the same sacrifice; their persons and ours justified together, by the same righteousness; they and we make up but one church, and general assembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the Jews are not called, and so are not perfect in themselves, or without us. Jews and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and besides, they and we shall be glorified together in soul and body to all eternity.

C H A P. XII.

In this chapter the apostle presses to a constant exercise of faith and patience, amidst the various afflictions the saints are exercised with; delivers out several exhortations useful in the christian life; and shews the difference between the legal and Gospel-dispensations. Having in the preceding chapter given many illustrious instances and examples of faith, he makes use of this cloud of witnesses, as he calls them, to engage the Hebrews to drop their unbelief, and run with faith and patience the race set before them, *ψ. 1.* and which he further urges from the example of Christ; from his concern in faith, being the author and finisher of it; from what he suffered when here on earth, both the contradiction of sinners, and the death of the cross, for the joy of having his people with him in heaven; and from his glorious state, being set down at the right hand of God. Whereas, as yet, they had not been called to shed their blood in their warfare against sin, *ψ. 2-4.* And that they must expect chastisement, and should bear it patiently, he cites a passage of scripture out of *Prov. iii. 11, 12.* which suggests, that those who are the children of God, and are loved and received by him, are chastened and scourged, *ψ. 5, 6.* Wherefore this was no other than dealing with them as children; and should they not be thus dealt with, it would be an argument that they were bastards, and not sons, *ψ. 7, 8.* And next the apostle argues from the right of parents to chastise their children, and the subjection that is yielded to them; that if the corrections of them, who were the fathers of their bodies, were quietly submitted to; then much more should those of the Father of their souls; and

the rather, since the chastenings of the former are only for temporal good, and according to their fallible judgments; whereas the latter are for spiritual profit, and an increase of holiness, *ψ. 9, 10.* And though it must be allowed, that no chastening, for the present time, is matter of joy but of grief; yet the effects of them are the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised by them, *ψ. 11.* Wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews to encourage themselves and others under afflictions; and to behave in such manner, and carry it so evenly, that they might not be an occasion of stumbling to weak believers, *ψ. 12, 13.* He exhorts them in general to follow peace with all men, and particularly holiness; which is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision of God, *ψ. 14.* and to take care that no heresy or immorality spring up among them, and be connived at, and cherished by them, to the troubling of some, and defiling of others, *ψ. 15.* and particularly, lest the sin of uncleanness, or any sort of profaneness should be found among them; of which Esau, the brother of Jacob, from whence they sprung, was guilty; whose profaneness lay in selling his birth right for a morsel of meat, and whose punishment was, that he should be deprived of the blessing; which decree was irrevocable, notwithstanding his tears, *ψ. 16, 17.* and to enforce these exhortations, the apostle observes to these believers, that they were not now under the law, but in a Gospel-church-state. The terror of the legal dispensation they were delivered from, is described by the place where the law was given, a mount burning with fire; by circumstances attending it, blackness, darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet; by the matter of it, a voice of words, which they that heard, intreated they might hear no more; and by the effect the whole had upon Moses himself, who quaked and trembled at what he saw and heard, *ψ. 18—21.* The happiness of the Gospel-dispensation, or of the Gospel-church-state, is expressed by the names of it, "called mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem;" and by the company the saints have there, and their fellowship with them; angels innumerable; elect men, whose names are written in heaven, and whose spirits are made perfectly just; God, the Judge of all; and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; whose blood being sprinkled on their consciences, spoke peace and pardon to them; such as neither Abel's blood nor sacrifice could speak, *ψ. 22—24.* From whence the apostle argues, that care should be taken

VOL. V.

not to neglect and despise the voice of Christ, who is now in heaven, and speaks from thence in his Gospel and ordinances; seeing they escaped not who rejected him that spake on earth, at mount Sinai, which was shaken by his voice: and the rather, since it appears from a prophecy in *Haggai ii. 6, 7.* that under the Gospel-dispensation, not only the earth but the heavens would be shaken, *ψ. 25, 26.* which is an emblem of the shaking and removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law; that Gospel-ordinances might take place, and remain for ever, *ψ. 27.* Upon the whole, the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, that seeing they had received the immovable kingdom of grace, and were admitted into the Gospel-dispensation, or church-state; that they would hold fast the Gospel of the grace of God, and serve the Lord, according to his revealed will, with reverence and godly fear, which would be acceptable to him; or otherwise he would be a consuming fire; as he is to all the despisers and neglecters of his Gospel and ordinances, *ψ. 28, 29.*

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about] As the Israelites were encompassed with the pillar of cloud, or with the clouds of glory in the wilderness, as the Jews say; see the note on *1 Cor. x. 1.* to which there may be an allusion here, since it follows,

With so great a cloud of witnesses] Or martyrs, as the Old Testament saints, the instances of whose faith and patience were produced in the preceding chapter: these, some of them, were martyrs in the sense in which that word is commonly used; they suffered in the cause, and for the sake of true religion; and they all bore a noble testimony of God, and for him; and they received a testimony from him; and will be hereafter witnesses for, or against us, to whom they are examples of the above graces: and these may be compared to a cloud, for the comfortable and reviving doctrines which they dropped; and for their refreshing examples in the heat of persecution; and for their guidance and direction in the ways of God; and more especially for their number, being like a thick cloud, and so many, that they compass about on every side, and are instructive every way. Hence the following things are inferred and urged,

S

Let

Let us lay aside every weight] Or burden; every sin, which is a weight and burden to a sensible sinner, and is an hindrance in running the christian race; not only indwelling sin, but every actual transgression, and therefore to be laid aside; as a burden, it should be laid on Christ; as a sin, it should be abstained from, and put off, with respect to the former conversation: also worldly cares, riches, and honours, when immoderately pursued, are a weight depressing the mind to the earth, and a great hindrance in the work and service of God, and therefore to be laid aside; not that they are to be entirely rejected, and not cared for and used, but the heart should not be set upon them, or be over-anxious about them: likewise the rites and ceremonies of Moses's law were a weight and burden, a yoke of bondage, and an intolerable one, and with which many believing Jews were entangled and pressed, and which were a great hindrance in the performance of evangelical worship; wherefore the exhortation to these Hebrews, to lay them aside, was very proper and pertinent, since they were useless and incommodious, and there had been a disannulling of them by Christ, because of their weakness and unprofitableness. Some observe, that the word here used signifies a tumor or swelling; and so may design the tumor of pride and vainglory, in outward privileges, and in a man's own righteousness, to which the Hebrews were much inclined; and which appears in an unwillingness to stoop to the cross, and bear afflictions for the sake of the Gospel; all which is a great enemy to powerful godliness, and therefore should be brought down, and laid aside. The Arabic version renders it, "every weight of luxury;" all luxurious living being prejudicial to real religion.

And the sin which doth so easily beset us] The Arabic version renders it, "easy to be committed;" meaning either the corruption of nature in general, which is always present, and puts upon doing evil, and hinders all the good it can; or rather some particular sin, as what is commonly called a man's constitution-sin, or what he is most inclined to, and is most easily drawn into the commission of; or it may be the sin of unbelief is intended, that being opposite to the grace of faith the apostle had been commending in the preceding chapter, and he here exhorts to; and is a sin which easily insinuates itself, and prevails, and that sometimes under the notion of a virtue, as if it would be immodest, or presumptuous to believe; the arguments for it are apt to be readily and quickly embraced; but as *every weight*, so every sin may be designed: some reference may be had to *Lam. i. 14.* where the church says, that

her transgressions were *wreathed*, יִשְׁתַּרְוּ "wreathed" "themselves, or wrapped themselves about her." The allusion seems to be to runners in a race, who throw off every thing that incumbers, drop whatsoever is ponderous and weighty, run in light garments, and lay aside long ones, which entangle and hinder in running, as appears from the next clause, or inference.

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us] The stadium, or race-plot, in which the christian race is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Christ; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Christ, is given to them: this race is *set before* the saints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they shall meet with in it, are appointed for them by him in his counsels and purposes; the mark to direct them, is set before them in the Gospel, even Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they shall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have respect unto: and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and every one of them, to *run* this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ; it is a motion forward, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; and to it swiftness and agility are necessary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness: it requires strength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and should be done *with patience*; which is very necessary, because of the many exercises in the way; and because of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very desirable: the examples of the saints, and especially of Christ, the forerunner, should move and animate unto it.

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith] Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eyes of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the Son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but *glimmering*,

mering, afterwards it increaseth, and is of a soul-humbling nature; it is marvellous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory: a believer should be always looking to Christ, and off of every object else, as the word here used signifies. Christ is to be looked unto as *Jesus*, a Saviour, who being appointed and sent by God to be a Saviour, came, and is become the author of eternal salvation; and to him only should we look for it: he is able and willing to save; he is a suitable, compleat, and only Saviour; and whoever look to him by faith, shall be saved; and he is to be considered, and looked unto, as *the author and finisher of faith*: he is the author or efficient cause of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himself; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; and it is the operation of Christ, by his Spirit; and the increase of it is from him, *Luke xvii. 5.* and he is the finisher of it; he gives himself, and the blessings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and strengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the salvation of the soul.

Who for the joy that was set before him] The word *אש*, rendered *for*, sometimes signifies, *in the room or stead of*, as in *Matt. ii. 22.* and chap. xx. 28. and is so rendered here in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and then the sense is, that Christ, instead of being in the bosom of the Father, came into this world; instead of being in the form of God, he appeared in the form of a servant; instead of the glory which he had with his Father from eternity, he suffered shame and disgrace; instead of living a joyful and comfortable life on earth, he suffered a shameful and an accursed death; and instead of the temporal joy and glory the Jews proposed to him, he endured the shame and pain of the cross: sometimes it signifies the end for which a thing is, as in *Eph. x. 31.* and may intend that for the sake of which Christ underwent so much disgrace, and such sufferings; namely, for the sake of having a spiritual seed, a numerous offspring with him in heaven, who are his joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the sake of the salvation of all the elect, on which his heart was set; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no small delight and pleasure to him. And to this agrees the Chaldee paraphrase of *Psal. xxi. 1.* "O Lord, in thy power shall the king Messiah, *משיח* rejoice, and in thy redemption how greatly will he exult!"

And also because of his own glory as mediator, which was to follow his sufferings, and which includes his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the whole honour and glory Christ has in his human nature; see *Psal. xvi. 8—11.* and with a view to all this, he

Endured the cross] Which is to be taken not properly for that frame of wood on which he was crucified; but, improperly, for all his sufferings, from his cradle to his cross; and particularly the tortures of the cross, being extended on it, and nailed unto it; and especially the death of the cross, which kind of death he endured to verify the predictions of it, *Psal. xxii. 16. Zech. xii. 10.* and to shew that he was made a curse for his people; and this being a Roman punishment, shews that the sceptre was taken from Judah, and therefore the Messiah must be come; and that Christ suffered for the Gentiles, as well as Jews: and this death he *endured* with great courage and intrepidity, with much patience and constancy, and in obedience to the will of his Father.

Despising the shame] Of the cross; for it was an ignominious death, as well as a painful one; and as he endured the pain of it with patience, he treated the shame of it with contempt; throughout the whole of his life, he despised the shame and reproach that was cast upon him; and so he did at the time of his apprehension, and when upon his trial, and at his death, under all the ignominious circumstances that attended it; which should teach us not to be ashamed of the reproach of Christ, but count it an honour to be worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God] Which is in heaven; and is expressive of the majesty and glory of God; and of the honour done to Christ in human nature, which is not granted to any of the angels: here Christ sits as God's fellow, as equal to him, as God, and as having done his work as man, and mediator; and this may assure us, that when we have run out our race, we shall sit down too with Christ upon his throne, and be at rest.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

For consider him] In the greatness of his person, as God, the Son of God, the heir of all things; and in his offices of prophet, priest, and king, as the Saviour of lost sinners, the leader and commander of the people, as the apostle and high priest of our profession: consider him in his hu-

man nature, his conversation on earth, and what he did, and suffered for men; how that in his nature he was pure and holy, in his conversation harmless and innocent, in his deportment meek and lowly; who went about doing good to the souls of men, and at last suffered and died, and is now glorified: consider the analogy between him and us, and how great is the disproportion; and therefore if he was ill treated, no wonder we should: consider him under all his reproaches and sufferings.

That endured such contradiction of sinners against himself] Against his person, they denying his Deity, and speaking against his Sonship, and against his offices; mocking him as a King, deriding him as a Prophet, and treating him with the utmost contempt as a Priest and Saviour; and against his actions, his works of mercy to the bodies of men, when done on the sabbath-day; his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, as if he was an encourager of them in sin, and a partner with them; his miracles, as if they were done by the help of the devil; and against the whole series of his life, as if it was criminal. Now we should analogize this contradiction, and see what proportion there is between this, and what is endured by us: we should consider the aggravations of it, that it was *against himself*; sometimes it was against his disciples, and him through them, as it is now against his members, and him in them; but here it was immediately and directly against himself: and this he endured *from sinners*; some more secret, as the Scribes, Sadduces, and Pharisees; some more open, as the common people; some of them the vilest of sinners, the most abandoned of creatures, as the Roman soldiers, and Herod's men of war: and this should be considered, that we cannot be contradicted by viler or meaner persons; and it is worthy of notice, with what courage and bravery of mind, with what patience and invincible constancy, he endured it: this should be recollected for imitation and encouragement.

Left ye be wearied, and faint in your minds] Contradiction is apt to make persons weary, and faint, as Rebekah was because of the daughters of Heth, and as Jeremiah was because of the derision of the Jews, *Gen. xxvii. 46. Jer. xx. 8, 9.* but a consideration of Jesus, and of what he has endured, tends to relieve the saints in such a condition; see *Matt. x. 25. Luke xxiii. 31.*

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood] They had resisted sin, and Satan, and the world; the men of

it, and the lusts of it, and its frowns and flatteries, and also false teachers, even every adversary of Christ, and their souls; but they had not, as yet, resisted unto blood, or to the shedding of their blood, as some of the Old Testament saints had done; as some in the times of the Maccabees, and as James, the apostle of Christ, and as Christ himself: wherefore the apostle suggests, that they ought to consider, that they had been indulged; and what they had been engaged in were only some light skirmishes; and that they must expect to suffer as long as they were in the world, and had blood in them; and that their blood, when called for, should be spilled for the sake of Christ.

Striving against sin] Which is the principal antagonist the believer has, and is here particularly pointed out: sin is here, by some, thought to be put for sinful men; or it may design the sin of those men, who solicited the saints to a defection from the truth; or the sin of apostasy itself; or that of unbelief; or rather indwelling-sin, and the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul. Now this is said, to sharpen and increase the saints' resentment and indignation against it, as being their antagonist, with whom they strive and combat, and which is the cause of all the evils in the world, exposes to wrath to come, and separates from communion with God; and to encourage them to bear their sufferings patiently, since they are not without sin, as Christ was; and since their afflictions and sufferings are for the subduing of sin, and the increase of holiness.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation] Or consolation, the consolatory word or doctrine, in *Prov. iii. 11.* This, by their conduct, the apostle feared they had forgotten, and therefore puts them in mind of it; or it may be read by way of question, "and have ye forgotten?" &c. do not ye remember? it would be right to call it to mind.

Which speaketh unto you as unto children] Not as the children of Solomon, but as the children of God, or of Christ the wisdom of God: here, by a prosopopeia, the word of exhortation is introduced as a person speaking.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord] By which is meant, not vindictive punishment; this would not be speaking to them, nor dealing with them as children, and would be contrary to the love of God towards them; besides, chastise-
ment

ment in this sense has been upon Christ for them, and it would be unjust to lay it on them again; but a fatherly correction is designed, and which is given in love by God, as a Father, and for the instruction of his children, as the word used signifies: and it is called not the *chastening* of men, but of the Lord; every chastening, or afflictive providence, is appointed by God, and is looked upon by believers, when grace is in exercise, as coming from him; and it is directed, and governed, and limited by him, and is overruled by him for his own glory, and their good; and this is not to be *despised*, as something nauseous and lothesome, or as unuseful and unprofitable, or as insignificant and unworthy of notice, but should be esteemed for the good ends which are sometimes answered by it.

Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him] God has various ways of rebuking, reproving and convincing, sometimes by his Spirit, sometimes by his word and ministers, and sometimes by afflictive providences; by these he rebukes his people for their sins, convinces them of them, and brings them to acknowledgment and confession; he makes them hereby sensible of their duty, in which they have been remiss, and brings them to a more constant and fervent discharge of it; he reproves them for, and convinces of their folly in trusting in the creature, or loving it too much, and of every wrong way they have been walking in; and these rebukes are not in a way of wrath, but love, and therefore saints should not faint at them: there are two extremes they are apt to run into, under such a dispensation; either to take no notice, and make light of an affliction, or else to be overwhelmed by it, and sink under it, both are guarded against in this exhortation.

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth] All men are not the objects of God's love, only a special people, whom he has chosen in Christ; for whom he has given his Son, when they were sinners and enemies; whom he quickens and calls by his grace, justifies, pardons, and accepts in Christ; and whom he causes to love him; these he loves with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and in a free and sovereign way, without any regard to any motive or condition in them. Now these are chastened by him, and loved while they are chastened; their chastening is in love, as appears from the nature of God's love to them, which changes not; from the nature of chasten-

ing itself, which is that of a father; from the divine supports granted under it; from the ends of it, which are, among others, that they might be more and more partakers of holiness, and not be condemned with the world; and from the issue of it, which is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So the Jews (*p*) often speak of, יסורין של אהבה "chastisements of love," in distinction from evil chastisements, or vindictive ones.

And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth] By whom are meant, not any of the angels, nor all the sons of men, but such whom God has predestinated to the adoption of children, and in the covenant of his grace has declared himself a Father to; for, whom Christ has a special regard, as children, and there partook of human nature, and died to gather them together, and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who appear to be the children of God by faith in Christ; and who have the spirit of adoption, witnessing their sonship to them; this is a valuable blessing of grace, and springs from love: and such are *received* by God into his heart's love and affection, with complacency and delight; and into the covenant of his grace, to share all the blessings and promises of it; and into his family, to enjoy all the privileges of his house, and into communion with himself; and they will be hereafter received by him into glory: now these he scourges; he suffers them sometimes to be scourged by men, and to be buffeted by Satan; and sometimes he scourges them himself with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but always in love.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

If ye endure chastening] In faith, with patience, with courage and constancy, with humility and reverence: there are many things which may encourage and animate the saints to endure it in such a manner; as that it is but a chastening, and the chastening of a Father; it should be considered from whence it comes, and for what ends; that it comes from the Lord, and is for his glory, and their good; the example of Christ, and of other saints, should excite unto it. The Jews have a saying (*q*), that "the doctrine of chastisements is silence;" that is, they are to be patiently bore

(p) Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 1. & 102. 4. & in Exod. fol. 98. 1. & 102. 3. & in Lev. fol. 19. 3. (q) T. Rab. Beracot, fol. 62. 3.

bore, and not murmured at. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read the words as an exhortation; the former of these renders it, "persevere in discipline;" the Syriac version, "endure correction;" the Arabic version, "be ye patient in chastisement;" and the Ethiopic version, "endure your chastening;" but then the word, *for*, should be supplied in the next clause, as it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, making that to be a reason enforcing this, *for*

God dealeth with you as with sons] Chastening is owning of them for his children, and it discovers them to be so, and shews that they continue such; he does not chasten them but when it is necessary; and whenever he does, it is in love and mercy, and for their good, and in the best time, seasonably, and in measure.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?] No one can be named, not the Son of God himself; he had the chastisement of our peace upon him; nor the more eminent among the children of God, as Abraham, David, and others; nor any in any catalogue, or list of them, such as in the preceding chapter; not one in any age or period of time whatever, in any bodies, societies, or communities of them, either under the Old or New Testament.

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

But if ye be without chastisement] Or have no affliction.

Whereof all are partakers] That is, all the children of God; they are all alike children; they are all in a state of imperfection, and prone to sin; God has an impartial respect unto them; and though they are not all alike chastened, nor chastened at all times, yet none are exempted from chastisement, but have it in some way or another, and at some time or another.

Then are ye bastards, and not sons] All are not sons that are under a profession of religion; all that are under a profession of religion are not chastised; but then those are not the children of God, but the children of the world, of Satan, and of the anti-christian harlot; for though all that are chastised are not children, yet all that are children are chastised: hence we learn, that outward peace and prosperity is not a note of a true church; and that such have reason to distrust their state, who know not what it is to have the chastising rod of God upon them; and that

afflictions are rather arguments for, than against sonship.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh] Earthly parents; who are so called, because they are the immediate causes and instruments of the generation of their children, and of their fleshly bodies, and worldly beings; and to distinguish them from the Father of spirits: and this shews; that they have not the spirit or soul from them, only the flesh or body, and which is frail and corrupt; and therefore goes by this name.

Which corrected us] Betimes, and at proper seasons, in love, and for instruction, and to prevent ruin, and death.

And we gave them reverence] By submitting to their correction, and hearkening to it; by taking shame to themselves, and acknowledging the offence committed; by retaining the same affection for them; and by a carefulness not to offend for the future.

Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?] That is, to God; who is so called, not because he is the creator of angels, who are spirits; but because he is the creator of the souls of men; the soul is the more noble and excellent part of man: it bears a resemblance to God; it is the life of man, and is immortal; it is exceeding precious, and the redemption of it: this was at first immediately created by God; and he still continues to create souls, which he preserves in their being, and has the power of saving and destroying them. Besides, God may be so called, because he is the author and donor of all spiritual gifts, and particularly of regenerating grace; it is he who renews a right spirit in men, and puts a new spirit into them: now such ought to be in *subjection* to him; not only as creatures to a creator, and as subjects to their prince; but as children to a father, and particularly to him, as and when correcting; they should bow to his sovereignty, resign to his will, be humble under his mighty hand, be still and quiet, and bear all patiently; the advantage arising from such a subjection, is life: *and live*; or "that ye may live;" or "and ye shall live;" more comfortably, and more to the glory of God, in communion and fellowship with him here, and in heaven to all eternity.

10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure ; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

For they verily for a few days chastened us] Which respects not the minority of children, during which time they are under the correction of parents, and which is but a few days ; nor the short life of parents ; but rather the end which parents have in chastening their children, which is their temporal good, and which lasts but for a few days ; which sense, the opposition in the latter part of the text requires : and this they do

After their own pleasure] Not to please and delight themselves in the pains and cries of their children, which would be brutish and inhuman ; though corrections are too often given to gratify the passions : nor merely in an arbitrary way, and when they please ; but the sense is, they correct as seems good unto them ; in the best way and manner ; to the best of their judgments, which are fallible.

But he for our profit] Saints are no losers by afflictions ; they lose nothing but their dross and tin ; they do not lose the love of God ; nor their interest in the covenant of grace ; nor the presence of God ; nor grace in their own hearts ; nor spiritual peace and comfort : on the contrary, they are real gainers by them ; their graces gain by them fresh lustre and glory ; they obtain a greater degree of spiritual knowledge, and a larger stock of experience ; and are hereby restored to their former state, duty, and zeal ; and become more conformable to Christ ; yea, their afflictions conduce to their future glory ; many are the profits arising from them. The Alexandrian copy reads in the plural number, *profits* : particularly God's end in chastening of his children is,

That we might be partakers of his holiness] Not the essential holiness of God, which is incommunicable ; but a communicative holiness of his, which it is his determining will his people should have : it comes from him, from whom every good and perfect gift does ; it is in Christ for them, and is received out of his fulness ; and is wrought in them by the Spirit ; and it bears a resemblance to the divine nature : now men are naturally destitute of this holiness ; they have it not by nature : but by participation, as God's gift ; and they first partake of it in regeneration ; and here an increase of it is designed, a gradual participation of it ; and it may include perfect holiness in heaven : afflictions are designed as means to bring persons to this end ; to bring them to a

sense of sin, an acknowledgment of it, an aversion to it, and to a view of pardon of it ; to purge it away ; to wean the saints from this world ; to increase their grace, and lead them on to a perfect state of glory, where there will be no more sin, and no more sorrow.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous] These words anticipate an objection, taken from the grief and sorrow that comes by afflictions ; and therefore how should they be for profit and advantage ? The apostle answers, by granting that no affliction *seemeth to be joyous*, in outward appearance to flesh and blood, and according to the judgment of carnal sense and reason ; in this view of afflictions, it must be owned, they do not appear to be matter, cause, or occasion of joy ; though they really are, when viewed by faith, and judged of by sanctified reason ; for they are tokens of the love of God and Christ ; are evidences of sonship ; and work together either for the temporal, or spiritual, or eternal good of the saints : and so likewise indeed *for the present* time, either whilst under them, or in the present state of things, they seem so ; but hereafter, either now when they are over ; or however in the world to come, when the grace, goodness, wisdom, and power of God in them, in supporting under them, bring out of them, and the blessed effects, and fruits of them, will be discerned, they will be looked upon with pleasure : but for the present, and when carnal sense and reason prevail, it must be allowed, that they are not matter of joy,

But grievous] — Or matter, cause, and occasion of grief ; they cause pain and grief to the afflicted, and to their friends and relations about them ; when soul-troubles attend them ; when God hides and especially, they are very grieving, and occasion heaviness, and are grievous to be born, his face, and the soul is filled with a sense of wrath, looking upon the chastening, as being in wrath and hot displeasure ; when Satan is let loose, and casts his fiery darts thick and fast ; and when the soul has lost its views of interest in the love of God, and in the grace of Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness.

Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby] Who are used unto afflictions ; trained up and instructed in the school of afflictions, as
the

the word may signify; in which many useful lessons of faith, and hope, patience, and experience; humility, self-denial, and resignation of will are learned: and to such, afflictions yield *the fruit of peace*; external peace and prosperity sometimes follow upon them; and oftentimes internal peace is enjoyed in them; and they always issue to such in eternal peace and everlasting happiness; and this peace arises from the *righteousness* of Christ; laid hold upon by faith, which produces a true conscience-peace, and entitles to that everlasting joy and rest which remains for the people of God. Moreover, the fruit of holiness may be designed, which saints by afflictions are made partakers of, and the peace enjoyed in that; for there is a peace, which though it does not spring from, yet is found in the ways of righteousness; and though this peace may not be had for the present, or while the affliction lasts, yet it is experienced *afterwards*; either after the affliction is over, in the present life, or however in eternity, when the saints enter into peace; for the end of such dispensations, and of the persons exercised by them, is peace.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down] These words may be considered as spoken to the Hebrews with respect to themselves; accordingly, the Syriac version reads, "your hands, and your knees;" who were sluggish and inactive in prayer, in hearing the word, in attendance on ordinances, in holding fast their profession, and in the performance of those things which adorn it; they were weary and fatigued with the weights and burdens of sins and afflictions; and were faint, fearful, and timorous, through distrust of the promised good, because of their persecutions, being in present distress, and in a view of approaching danger, with which they might be surprised, as well as affected with their present afflictions: and then the exhortation to *lift up the hands which hang down*,

And the feeble knees] Is to be active in every duty; to be courageous against every enemy; to bear patiently every burden; to take heart, and be of good cheer under every afflictive providence: or else they may be considered as an exhortation to them with respect to others, which seems to be most agreeable to *Isaiah xxxv. 3.* from whence they are taken; and then what is signified in them is done by sympathizing with persons in distress; by speaking comfortably to them, and by bearing their burdens.

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

And make straight paths for your feet] By feet are meant the walk and conversation of the saints, both in the church, and in the world, *Gal. vii. 1.* and there are *paths* made ready for their feet to walk in; as the good old paths of truth, of the word and worship of God, of faith and holiness: and to make these paths *straight*, is to make the word of God the rule of walking; to avoid carefully joining any thing with it as a rule; to attend constantly on the ordinances of Christ; to go on evenly in a way of believing on him; to walk in some measure worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and by way of example of others.

Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way] "A lame member," as the Syriac version; a lame member of the body of Christ, the church; or "a lame person," as the Arabic version, a weak believer; one that is ready to halt, either through the corruption of nature, or through the weakness of grace, or through want of light and judgment, and through instability and inconstancy; lest such an one should, through the irregular walk and conversation of others, be stumbled and offended, and go out of the way, and leave the paths of righteousness and truth. God takes care of, and has a regard to such, and he would have others also, *Mic. iv. 6. Zeph. iii. 19.* The Ethiopic version reads, "that your halting may be healed, and not offended;" that you yourselves may not halt and stumble.

But let it rather be healed] The fallen believer be restored, the weak brother confirmed, the halting professor be strengthened, and every one be built up and established upon the most holy faith, and in the pure ways of the Gospel.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Follow peace with all men] That are in a natural and domestic relation to one another, being of the same family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the same nation, city, or society; and that are in a spiritual one, being members of the same church; or, if not, yet being saints, and though in some things different in judgment; yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lies: and perhaps, by *all men*, the Gentiles may be more especially designed, whose peace the Hebrews thought they were not to seek, *Deut. xxiii. 6.* mistaking the sense

sense of the text, by applying it to the Gentiles in general: to *follow peace*, signifies an eager pursuit after it, in the use of proper means; exerting the utmost of a man's power to attain it, in all things possible: many things serve to enforce this upon the saints; this is most agreeable to all the three divine persons; to God, who is the God of peace; to Christ, the prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace; and to the characters of the saints, who are sons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profession of the Gospel of peace; and to the privileges they enjoy, being interested in the covenant of peace, partaking of spiritual peace now, and being intitled to eternal peace hereafter: and this agrees with the sayings and counsels of the ancient Jews. It was a saying of Hillel (r), who lived about the times of Christ; "Be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace, *והיה אחד מתלמידי אהרן*" and followed peace." This is said of Aaron in the Talmud (s), that "He loved peace, and followed peace, and made peace between a man and his neighbour, as is said, *Mal. ii. 6.*" They recommend peace on many accounts; and say, Great is peace; and among the rest, because it is one of the names of God (t).

And holiness]. This being added to peace, shews, that peace is no further to be followed, than is consistent with holiness; and holiness here does not design any particular branch of holiness, as chastity of the body and mind, but the whole of holiness, inward and outward; and intends true holiness, in opposition to ceremonial holiness, which the Hebrews were fond of, and pursued after: it means even perfect holiness; for though holiness is not perfect in this life, yet it will be in heaven; and there is a perfection of it in Christ; and it is to be followed after, by going to Christ for more grace, and exercising faith upon him, as our sanctification; and by eager desires, that the Spirit of God would sanctify us more and more, and enable us, by his grace and strength to walk in the way of holiness, till we get safe to heaven.

Without which no man shall see the Lord]. Or God, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, with the beatific vision in heaven: or the Lord Jesus Christ, "our Lord," as the Syriac version reads; even in this life, so as to have communion with him; and hereafter, so as to behold his glory, both intellectually and cor-

porally: to such a slight holiness is necessary; for God is holy, and Christ is holy, and so is heaven, and so are the angels, and the souls of men in it.

15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Looking diligently]. Acting the part of "bishops" or overseers, as the word signifies; and so this exhortation either respects officers of the church of the Hebrews, whose business it was more especially to inspect into the principles and practices of the members of it, and take care that they did not imbibe false doctrines, or live immoral lives; or rather, the several members of the church, whose business it is to watch over one another, since this epistle seems to be written to the whole church.

Lest any man fail of the grace of God]. Not the free favour and love of God in Christ, which is everlasting, unchangeable, and from whence there is no separation; nor the grace of God implanted in the heart in regeneration, which is incorruptible, never-failing, but always remains, as do faith, hope, and love; but either the whole doctrine of the Gospel, which is a declaration of the grace of God; or particularly the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which men may receive in vain, and fall from, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Gal. v. 4. to which these Hebrews might be prone: and such *fail* of it, who either come short of it, do not come up to it, receive and embrace it; or who having professed it, drop it and deny it: now such should be looked after, and such a case should be diligently looked into; because the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the good of souls, and the well-being, and even the continuance of the church-state are concerned.

Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled]. The Alexandrian copy reads *οι πολλοι*, "the many," the common people, private members of the church; though it may intend either things or persons: it may design things; and these either the corruption of nature in general, which is a root that lies hidden in a man's heart; and is a root or gall of bitterness; and is apt to spring up, and bring forth bitter fruit, and gives trouble both to a man's self, and others; and is of a defiling nature in particular sins; such as malice, strife, and contention, covetousness, lust, pride, oppression, idleness, &c. which make bitter work, and occasion great trouble in churches, oftentimes: or errors, and heresies,

(r) Pirke Abot, c. 2. §. 12.

(s) T. Bab. Sanhedrim,

fol. 6. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2.

(t) Vajikra

Rabba, §. 9. fol. 253. 2.

heresies, which sometimes, like roots, lie under ground, secret and undiscovered; and are bitter ones in their effects, bringing ruin and swift destruction on the souls of men; and these sometimes spring up in churches, whilst ministers and members are asleep, or not so diligent and watchful as they should be; and occasion great trouble, and are very infectious, and defiling: moreover, persons may be designed; which agrees well with *Deut.* xxix. 18. from whence this phrase is taken; and with the instance in the following verse, such as all immoral persons, and false teachers, particularly, self-justiciaries, that preach up the doctrine of justification by the works of the law: this was the capital mistake, and rooted error of the Jewish nation; and a bitter one it was; it produced many bitter fruits of pride and vain glory; and this sprung up in the church, and troubled and defiled many there and elsewhere, being spread by the abettors of it; see *Acts* xv. 24. *Gal.* i. 6. and chap. v. 9, 10. Now, care should be taken, that no such person be in churches, holding such an error; because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the comfort of souls; the peace of the church, and the growth and increase of it, which must be hurt by such men and doctrines; so *ρίζα αμαρτίας*, “a sinful root,” is used for a wicked man, in *1 Matt.* i. 11. and *שורש חמרי* “a root of bitterness” signifies in Jewish writings (*u*), an error, or heresy, in opposition to “a root of faith,” or a fundamental doctrine.

16 Left there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth right.

Left there be any fornicator, or profane person] The first of these is guilty of a sin against the second table of the law, as well as against his own body; and which is opposed to the holiness the apostle had before exhorted to; such who are guilty of it; are not to be continued in the communion of the church; and it is a sin which lived in, unrepented of, excludes from the kingdom of heaven: the latter is one who is a transgressor of the first table of the law; who is an idolater, a swearer, a despiser of public worship and ordinances, and who behaves irreverently in divine service, and mocks at the future state, as Esau; to whom both these characters seem to belong: and this agrees with what the Jews say concerning him: they have a tradition (*w*), that he committed five transgressions on the day he came out of the field weary. “He committed

“idolatry; he shed innocent blood; and lay “with a virgin betrothed; and denied the life “of the world to come, (or a future state;) and “despised his birth right.” It is elsewhere (*x*) a little differently expressed: “Esau the wicked, “committed five transgressions on that day: he “lay with a virgin betrothed; and killed a person; and denied the resurrection of the dead; “and denied the root, or foundation, (that is, “that there is a God;) and despised his birth “right; and besides, he desired his father’s death, “and sought to slay his brother.” It is common for them to say of him, that “he was an ungodly man;” and particularly, that “he was “a murderer, a robber,” *ונאמך* “and an adulterer (*y*);” and that he has no part in the world to come (*z*).

Who for one morsel of meat sold his birth right] The account of which is in *Genesis* xxv. 29—34. this includes all the privileges which he had a right unto, by being the first-born; as a peculiar blessing from his father; a double portion of goods; and dominion over his brethren: and it is commonly said by the Jews, that the priesthood belonged to the first-born, before the Levitical dispensation; and that for this reason, Jacob coveted the birth right (*a*); Esau being a wicked man, and unfit for it. The birth right was reckoned sacred; it was typical of the primogeniture of Christ; of the adoption of saints, and of the heavenly inheritance belonging thereunto; all which were despised by Esau: and so the Jewish paraphrases (*b*) interpret the contempt of his birth right, a despising of his part in the world to come, and a denial of the resurrection of the dead; and his contempt of it was shewn in his selling it; and this was aggravated by his selling it for one morsel of meat; which was, bread, and pottage of lentiles, *Gen.* xxv. 34. The Jewish writers speak of this bargain and sale much in the same language as the apostle here does; they say (*c*) of him, this is the man that sold his birth right *בער בכר לחם* “for a morsel of bread;” and apply to him the passage in *Prov.* xxviii. 21. *For a piece of bread that man will transgress.*

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

For

(u) *Cofsi*, *Orat.* i. fol. 35. 1.
Usual in *Gen.* xiv. 29.

(w) *Targum* *Jon. ben*

(x) *Shemot* *Rabba*, §. 1. fol. 89. 3. T. *Bab. Bava Bathra*, fol. 16. 2. (y) *Tzeror* *Hammor*, fol. 27. 1. (z) *Ibid.* fol. 26. 3. (a) *Berehit* *Rabba*, §. 63. fol. 56. 2. (b) *Targum* *Hieros.* & *Jon.* in *Gen.* xxv. 34. *Berehit* *Rabba*, *Ibid.* (c) *Tzeror* *Hammor*, fol. 26. 4. & 27. 2.

For ye know how that afterward] After he had had his pottage; after he had sold his birth right for it, and the blessing with it; after his father had blessed Jacob: this the apostle relates to the Hebrews, as a thing well known to them; they having read the books of Moses, and being conversant with them, in which the whole history of this affair is recorded: how that

When he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected] By his father, who refused to give him the blessing, but confirmed what he had given to Jacob; and also by God, he being the object of his hatred; concerning whom he had said, even before his birth, *The elder shall serve the younger*, Rom. ix. 11—13.

For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears] Gen. xxvii. 34, 38. though he was very solicitous for the blessing, and shed many tears to obtain it, yet he had no true repentance for his sin in selling the birth right. Tears are not an infallible sign of repentance: men may be more concerned for the loss and mischief that come by sin, than for the evil that is in it; and such repentance is not sincere; it does not spring from love to God, or a concern for his glory; nor does it bring forth proper fruits; or rather, the sense of the words is, that notwithstanding all his solicitude, importunity, and tears, he found no place of repentance in his father Isaac; he could not prevail upon him to change his mind, to revoke the blessing he had bestowed on Jacob, and confer it on him, Gen. xxvii. 33. for he plainly saw it was the mind of God that the blessing should be where it was; whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. This latter seems to be the better interpretation of the words, though the former agrees with the Targum on Job xv. 20. "All the days of Esau the ungodly, they expected that he would have repented, but he repented not."

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched] The design of the apostle in the following words is, in general, to engage the Hebrews to adhere closely to the Gospel, from the consideration of the superior excellency of it to the law; and in particular, to enforce his former exhortations, to cheerfulness under afflictions; to an upright walk in the ways of God; to follow peace with all men, even with the Gentiles, and holiness both of heart and life; and to value the

doctrine of the Gospel; and to take heed that none fail of it, or act unbecomingly: and here the apostle observes, what the believing Hebrews were not come to, being delivered from it, namely, the legal dispensation, which was their privilege; the happiness of which is expressed by a detail of particular circumstances, which attended the giving of the law to the Jews: it was given on a mount which might be touched; that is, by God, who descended on it, and by touching it caused it to smoke, quake, and move, Exodus xix. 18. compare with this, Psalm lxviii. 8. and civ. 32. and cxliv. 5. for it was not to be touched by the Israelites, nor by their cattle, Exodus xix. 12, 13. that is, at the time that the law was given, and Jehovah was upon it; otherwise it might be touched; and the meaning is, that it was an earthly mountain, that might be approached to, and be seen and felt, and not of a spiritual nature, as Sion, or the church of God; and so may be expressive of the carnality of the law, and also of the moveableness of it.

And that burned with fire] As mount Sinai did, Exod. xix. 18. Deut. iv. 11. and chap. v. 23. which set forth the majesty of God when upon it, at whose feet went forth burning coals; and also the wrath of God, as an evening lawgiver and judge; and the terror of that law, which strikes the minds of the transgressors of it with an expectation of fiery indignation; and so points out the end of such transgressors, which is to be burnt.

Nor unto blackness, and darkness] Which covered the mount when God was upon it, Exodus xix. 16, 18. Deut. iv. 11. and which also may express the majesty of God, round about whom are clouds and darkness; and also the horror of the legal dispensation, and the obscurity of it; little being known by the Jews of the spirituality of the law, of the strict justice of God, and of the righteousness which the law requires, and of the end and use of it; and especially of the way of salvation by Christ; and so dark were they at last, as to prefer their own traditions before this law: it is added,

And tempest] There being thunderings and lightnings, which were very terrible, Exod. xix. 16. and chap. xx. 18. and though there is no express mention made of a tempest by Moses, yet Josephus (d) speaks not only of very terrible thunderings and lightnings, but of violent storms of wind, which produced exceeding great rains; and the Septuagint on Deut. iv. 11. and ch. v. 22.

use

(d) Antiq. l. 3. c. 5. §. 2.

use the same words as the apostle does here, "blackness, darkness, and tempest." This also may denote the majesty of God who was then present; the terror of that dispensation; the horrible curses of the law; and the great confusion and disquietude raised by it in the conscience of a sinner.

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

And the sound of a trumpet] *Exod. xix. 16, 19.* and chap. xx. 18. which made it still more awful, as the sound of the trumpet will at the last day.

And the voice of words] Of the ten words, or decalogue; which was an articulate voice formed by angels; and, therefore, the Law, is called the word spoken by angels, Heb. ii. 2. and is represented as the voice of God himself, *Exod. xx. 1.* who made use of the ministry of angels to deliver the law to Moses; which voice is called דְּבַר יְהוָה by the voice of words, in *Deut. iv. 12.*

Which voice they that heard, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more] Fearing that they should die; wherefore, they desired Moses to be their Mediator, and draw nigh to God, and hear his words, and speak them to them from him, *Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 24-27.*

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

For they could not endure that which was commanded] In the law; not that they disliked and despised the law, as unregenerate men do; but they could not endure it, or bear it, as a yoke, it being a yoke of bondage; nor as a covenant of works, it requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform; and as it shewed them their sins, but did not direct them to a Saviour; as it was an accusing, cursing and condemning law; and, as a fiery one, revealing wrath, and filling the conscience with it; unless this should have any respect to the following edict, more particularly.

And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart] And, if a beast, much more a man: and, how easily, through inadvertence, might this be done? and, how terrible was the punishment? Nothing less than death, by stoning, or being shot. And this they could not bear to hear, and think of: the

last clause, "or thrust through with a dart," is wanting, in the Alexandrian and Beza's Claramontane copies, in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and yet is necessary to be retained, being in the original text, in *Exodus xix. 12, 13.*

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

And so terrible was the sight] Of the smoke, fire, and lightnings; or of God himself, who descended on the mount; with which agrees the Arabic version, which renders the words, "and so terrible was he who vouchsafed himself to be seen;" not in the bush burning with fire; at which time Moses was afraid to look upon God, *Exodus iii. 6.* but on mount Sinai, when the law was given.

That Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake] Perhaps, he might say this, when he spake, and God answered him, *Exodus xix. 19.* These words are no where recorded in scripture; wherefore the apostle had them, either by divine revelation, or from tradition, confirmed by the former: for the Jews have a notion, that Moses did quake and tremble, and when upon the mount; and that he expressed his fear and dread. Moses said before him, "Lord of the world, אֲדֹנָי עֲלֵינוּ "I am afraid," lest they, the angels, should burn (or consume) me, with the breath of their mouth (e)." Compare this last clause with 2 *Theff. ii. 8.* and elsewhere (f), those words being cited, *he called unto Moses, Exod. xxiv. 16.* it is observed; "This scripture comes not, but לֵאמֹר "to terrify him;" that so the law might be given "with fear, fervour, and trembling; as it is said, *Psalms ii. 11.*" Once more (g), "At the time that the holy blessed God said to Moses, "Go, get thee down, for thy people have corrupted themselves, *Exod. xxxii. 7.* מִרְעוּתָם מֵעַתָּה "Moses trembled;" and he could not speak, &c." And again, it is said (h), that when Moses was on mount Sinai, supplicating for the people of Israel, five destroying angels appeared, and immediately נִחְיָא מֹשֶׁה "Moses was afraid." Now this circumstance is mentioned by the apostle, to aggravate the terror of that dispensation; that Moses, a great, and good man, and who had much familiarity with God, the General of the people of Israel, their Leader and Commander, a man of great courage and presence of mind, and was their Mediator between God and them; and yet feared,

(e) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2. Yalkut par. 2, fol. 92. 2.

(f) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 2.

(g) Zohar in *Exod.* fol. 24. 4.

(h) Midrash Kohelet, fol. 69. 4.

and quaked. The best of men are not without sin; and the most holy man on earth cannot stand before a holy God, and his holy law, upon the foot of his own righteousness, without trembling: it is an awful thing to draw nigh to God; and there is no such thing as doing it without a mediator; and that mediator must be more than a creature: and it is our happiness, that we have such a mediator, who never feared nor quaked; who failed not, nor was he discouraged.

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

But ye are come unto mount Sion] The Alexandrian copy reads, as in *ψ. 18. For ye are not come*; which may seem to favour that interpretation of this passage, which refers it to the heavenly state; to which saints, in this present life, are not as yet come: but, by *mount Sion*, and the other names here given, is meant the church of God under the Gospel-dispensation, to which the believing Hebrews were come; in distinction from the legal dispensation, signified by *mount Sinai*, from which they were delivered: and this is called *mount Sion*, because, like that, it is beloved of God; chosen by him; and is the place of his habitation: here his worship is, and his word and ordinances are administered; here he communes with his people, and distributes his blessings: and this, as *mount Sion*, is a perfection of beauty; the joy of the whole earth; is strongly fortified by divine power, and is immovable; and is comparable to that mountain for its height and holiness: and, to come to Sion, is to become a member of a Gospel-church, and partake of the ordinances, enjoy the privileges, and perform the duties belonging to it.

And unto the city of the living God] The Gospel-church is a city, built on Christ the foundation; and is full of inhabitants, true believers, at least it will be in the latter day; it is pleasantly situated by the river of God's love, and by the still waters of Gospel-ordinances; it is governed by wholesome laws of Christ's enacting, and is under proper officers of his appointing; and is well guarded by watchmen, which he has set upon the walls of it; and it is endowed with many privileges; as, access to God, freedom from the arrests of justice; and from condemnation; adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance: and this may be called, *the city of God*, because it is of his building, and here he dwells, and protects, and defends it; and, who is styled, *the living God*, to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles,

which are lifeless and inanimate, no other than stocks and stones.

The heavenly Jerusalem] The church of God goes by the name of *Jerusalem* often, both in the Old and in the New Testament; with which it agrees in its name, which signifies "the vision of peace, or they shall see peace." Christ, the king of it, is the Prince of peace; the members of it, are sons of peace, who enjoy a spiritual peace now, and an everlasting one hereafter: like that, it is compact together; consisting of saints cemented together in love, in the order and fellowship of the Gospel; and is well fortified, God himself, and his power, being all around it, and having salvation for walls and bulwarks, and being encamped about by angels; and it is a free city, being made so by Christ, and, through him, enjoying the liberty of grace now, and having a title to the liberty of glory in the world to come. As Jerusalem was, it is the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, and the place of divine worship: it is called *heavenly*, to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem; and to express the excellency of it, as well as to point out its original: the members of it, are from heaven, being born from above; their conversation is now in heaven; and they are designed for that place; and its doctrines and ordinances are all from thence.

And to an innumerable company of angels] Which are created spirits, immaterial and immortal; very knowing, and very powerful; and swift to do the will of God; they are holy, and immutably so, being the elect of God, and confirmed by Christ: and saints now are brought into a state of friendship with them, and into the same family; and are social worshippers with them; and they have access into heaven, where angels are; and with whom they shall dwell for ever: and, in the present state of things, they share the benefit and advantages of their kind offices; who have sometimes provided food for their bodies; healed their diseases; directed and preserved them on journeys; prevented outward calamities; delivered them out of them, when in danger; restrained things hurtful, and cut off their enemies: and, with regard to things spiritual, they have sometimes made known the mind and will of God unto the saints; have comforted them under their distresses; helped them against Satan's temptations; are present at their death, and carry their souls to glory; and will gather the saints together at the last day: and, as to the number of them, they are innumerable; they are the armies of heaven; and there is a multitude of the heavenly host; there are more than twelve legions of angels; their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands.

thousands of thousands: and this makes both for the glory and majesty of God, whose attendants they are; and, for the comfort and safety of saints, to whom they minister, and about whom they encamp: a like phrase is used in 2 *Esdras* vi. 3.

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

To the general assembly] A *panegyris*, the word here used, signified a public and solemn assembly of the Greeks, either at their games, or feasts, or fairs, or on religious accounts; and denotes a large collection and convention of men; and, sometimes the place where they met together (*i*); and is here used by the apostle for the church of God, consisting of all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles, and the meeting of them together: they met together in the infinite mind of God from all eternity; and in Christ, their head and representative, both then and in time; and at the last day, when they are all gathered in, they will meet together personally; and a joyful meeting it will be; and a very *general* one, more so than the *assembly* of the Jews at any of their solemn feasts, to which the apostle may have some respect; since this will consist of some of all nations, that have lived in all places, and in all ages of time.

And church of the first-born, which are written in heaven] By the *church*, is not meant any particular, or congregational church, nor any national one; but the church catholic or universal; which consists only of God's elect, and of all of them in all times and places; and reaches even to the saints in heaven: this church is invisible at present, and will never fail; of which Christ is the head, and for which he has given himself: now the persons that belong to this church, are styled the *first-born*; who are not the apostles only, who received the first-fruits of the Spirit; nor the first converts among the Jews, who first trusted in Christ; but all the chosen of God, who are equally the sons of God, and born of him; are equally loved by him, and equally united to Christ, and interested in him: they have the same privileges, honours, and dignity, and shall enjoy the same inheritance; they are all first-born, and are so called, with respect to the angels, the sons of God, as Christ is, with respect to the saints, the many brethren of his: and these are said to be *written in heaven*; not in the earth, *Jer.*

xvii. 13. such writing abides not; nor in the book of the scriptures, for the names of all are not written there; nor in the general book of God's decrees, which relate to all mankind; but in the Lamb's book of life, kept in heaven; and is no other, than their election of God: and this way of speaking concerning it, shews it to be personal and particular; that it is firm, sure and constant; that it is out of the reach of men and devils to erase it; it denotes the exact knowledge God has of them, and expresses their right to heaven, and the certainty of their coming there: now all such, who are truly come to Sion, are openly come to this assembly and church, and appear to be a part thereof, and are among the first-born, and have their names written in heaven.

And to God the Judge of all] The Ethiopic version reads, "the judge of righteousness," or the righteous judge: some think, that Christ is here meant; who is truly and properly God, and is the judge: all judgment is committed to him; he is judge of all; he is ordained judge of quick and dead; for which he would not have been fit had he not been God: true believers come to him by faith, and that, as their Judge, King, and Governor; and it is their privilege, that Christ is and will be the Judge of all at the last day; and hence is his coming to judgment desirable to them. But since Christ is spoken of in the next verse as a distinct person, to whom the saints come, God the Father seems rather to be designed here: and it is one of the privileges of the saints, in the present life, that they have access to God: all men are at a distance from him, in a state of nature; and they naturally run further and further from him, and have no desire after him; and, when they are made sensible of sin, they are afraid and ashamed to come to him; nor is there any coming to God, but through Christ; and this is a fruit of God's everlasting love, what follows upon electing grace, is an effect of Christ's death, and is owing to the quickening grace of the Spirit; it is performed in a spiritual way, and is by faith; it is a coming to the throne of God, even to his seat, to communion with him, and to a participation of his grace: and it is their privilege that they have access to him as the Judge of all; not only as a Father, and as the God of all grace, but as a Judge, and a righteous one, to whom they can come without terror; for though he is just, yet he is a Saviour, and the Justifier of his people, on account of the righteousness of his Son; whose sins he pardons in a way of justice, through the blood of Christ; and is their patron, protector, and defender, who will right their wrongs, and avenge their cause.

(i) Vid. Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 7.

And to the spirits of just men made perfect] Which may be understood of the saints on earth, who are *just men*; not naturally, for so no man is, but the reverse; nor in opinion only, or merely externally, as the scribes and Pharisees were; nor by the deeds of the Law; nor by obedience to the Gospel; nor by faith, either as wrought in them, or done by them, though by the object of it; nor by an infusion of righteousness into them; but by imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them: and these are *made perfect*; not as to sanctification, unless in Christ, or in a comparative sense, and with respect to the parts of the new man, but not as to degrees; for no man is without sin, and the best stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; but as to justification, Christ has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and has perfectly expiated their sins, and perfectly redeemed them from all sin, and has procured a full pardon of them; and they are completely righteous through his righteousness: and the *spirits*, or souls of these, are only mentioned, because the communion of saints in a Gospel-church-state lies chiefly in the souls and spirits of each other, or in spiritual things relating to their souls; and their souls are greatly affected, and knit to each other: though the saints in heaven may be here intended, at least included; whose *spirits* or souls are separate from their bodies; and they are the souls of *just men*, for none but such enter into the kingdom of heaven; where they are *made perfect*, in knowledge, in holiness, in peace, and joy; though they have not their bodies, nor as yet all the saints with them. Now believers, in the present state of things, may be said to be *come* to them, being come to the church below, which is a part of that above; as also in hope, expectation, and desire. The apostle seems to have respect to some distinctions among the Jews: they divide mankind into three sorts; some are perfectly wicked; and some are perfectly righteous; and there are others that are between both (*k*): they often speak of נִמְנָמִים זְרִיקִים *just men perfect* (*l*); and distinguish between a just man perfect, and a just man that is not perfect (*m*); as they do also between penitents and just men perfect; see the note on *Luke* xv. 7.

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that* of Abel.

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant] Of the new covenant, and of Christ's being the mediator of it, see the notes on chapter viii. 6, 8. *Coming to Christ*, is by faith; and is different from a corporal coming to him in the days of his flesh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances: it is a coming to him under a sense of want, and upon a sight of fulness; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace; and souls must come to Christ as naked sinners, and without a mediator, without any thing of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all sensible sinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of saints: it is the blessing of blessings; such are safe, and settled, and at peace, who are come to Jesus; they can want no good thing for all are theirs; they have free access to God through him, and a right to all privileges.

And to the blood of sprinkling] That is, the blood of Christ; so called, either in allusion to the blood of the passover, which was received in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop was sprinkled upon the lintel and two side-posts of the doors of the houses in which the Israelites were; which being looked upon by *Jehovah*, he passed over them, and all were safe within, so that the destroyer did not touch them, when the first-born in Egypt were destroyed, *Exodus* xii. which is the case of all such as are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus: or else to the blood of the covenant, sprinkled by Moses on the book, and on all the people, *Exodus* xxiv. 8. or to the several sprinklings of blood in the legal sacrifices: and the phrase may denote the application of Christ's blood to his people, for justification, pardon, and cleansing, which is their great mercy and privilege.

That speaketh better things than that of Abel] Either "than Abel," as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; *who being dead, yet speaks*; and who was a type of Christ in his death; and the punishment of it; for as he was slain by his own brother, who was punished for it, so Christ was put to death by his own nation and people, the Jews, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but the efficacy of Christ's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchase of his church and people, shews him to be greater than Abel; and it speaks better things than he did, or does: or else, "than the blood of Abel," as the Arabic version renders it; Abel's blood cried for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Christ, and in the court of conscience, where it is sprinkled by his Spirit: or than the sprinkling of the blood of Abel's sacrifice, or than

(*k*) T. Hieros. Rosh hashanah, fol. 37. 1. & T. Bab. Rosh hashanah, fol. 16. 2. Derech Erets, fol. 19. 4. (*l*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. & 39. 3. T. B. Taanith, fol. 18. 2. & Rosh hashanah, fol. 4. 1. Pesechim, fol. 8. 1, 2. (*m*) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1.

than Abel's sacrifice; which was the first blood that was sprinkled in that way, and the first sacrifice mentioned that was offered up by faith, and was typical of Christ's: but then Christ's sacrifice itself is better than that; and the sprinkling of his blood, to which believers may continually apply for their justification, remission, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holiest of all, is of greater efficacy than the sprinkling of blood in Abel's sacrifice; and calls for and procures better things, than that did: which sense may the rather be chosen, since the apostle's view, in this epistle, is to shew the superior excellency of Christ's sacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as Abel's was, chap. xi. 4.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh] Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaks better things than Abel, or than his blood and sacrifice: he was the speaker in the council and covenant of grace, that spoke for the elect; in the creation of all things out of nothing, that said, and it was done; in giving the law to the Israelites in the wilderness, for he is the angel which spake to Moses in mount Sinai; he spoke to God for the Old Testament saints, and was the angel of God's presence to them; he spoke in his own person, as the prophet of the church, in the days of his flesh; and he now speaks in heaven, by appearing in the presence of God for his people, and by presenting his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he speaks by his Spirit, in and to the hearts of his saints; and by his ministers in the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: nor should he be refused, as he is, when his Gospel is made light of, and neglected; when men excuse themselves from an attendance on it; when they will not hear it; or, when they do, and contradict and blaspheme, despise and reproach it; or leave off hearing it. Care should be taken that Christ is not refused in the ministry of the word, which may be enforced from the greatness and excellency of the person speaking, who is God, and not a mere man; from the excellency of the matter spoken, the great salvation: and the rather, diligent heed should be had unto him, since there is a backwardness to every thing that is spiritual and heavenly; and since Satan is vigilant and industrious to put off persons from hearing the Gospel, or to steal the word from them.

For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth] The Ethiopic version renders it, "who appeared to them on the mount;" that is, on mount Sinai; meaning either God himself, who descended on the mount, and spoke the ten commandments to the children of Israel; or Christ, the angel that spake to Moses in it; or rather, Moses himself, who was on the earth, and of the earth, earthly; who spake from God to the people, being their mediator; him the Jews refused, would not obey him, but thrust him away, Acts vii. 39. though they promised to hear and do all that was said to them; wherefore they did not escape divine vengeance and punishment; their carcases fell in the wilderness at several times, in great numbers, and were not suffered to enter into Canaan's land.

Much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven] That is, Christ, who came from heaven originally; is the Lord from heaven; whose doctrine is from heaven; and who, having done his work, is gone to heaven; where he now is, and from whence he speaks; and from hence he will come a second time, as Judge of all. There have been, and are some, that turn away from him; from a profession of him, and his Gospel and ordinances, and draw back unto perdition; such shall not escape divine wrath and vengeance; the worst punishment shall be inflicted on them; see chapter x. 29.

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

Whose voice then shook the earth] That is, at the giving of the law on mount Sinai: Christ was then present; his voice was then heard; which was either the voice of thunder, or the voice of the trumpet, or rather the voice of words: this shook the earth, Sinai, and the land about it, and the people on it; which made them quake and tremble, even Moses himself; see Exod. xix. 18. Psalm lxxviii. 8.

But now he hath promised, saying] In Haggai ii. 6:

Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven] Not only the land of Judea, and particularly Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, who were all shaken and moved, and troubled at the news of the birth of the Messiah, the desire of all nations, the prophet Haggai speaks of, Matt. ii. 2, 3. but the heaven also; by prodigies in it, as the appearance of a wonderful star, which guided the wise men from the east; and by the motions of the heavenly inhabitants, the angels, who descended

descended in great numbers, and made the heavens resound with their songs of praise, on account of Christ's incarnation, *Matt. ii. 2. Luke ii. 10, 13, 14.* How the apostle explains and applies this, may be seen in the next verse.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

And this word, Yet once more] Or as it is in *Haggai ii. 6. Yet once it is a little while;* which suggests, that as something had been done already, so in a very little time, and at once, something very marvellous and surprising would be effected: and it

Signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made] Which some understand of what will be done at Christ's coming to judgment; as the passing away of the heavens and the earth, which are things that are made, or created, by the power of God; when there will be a shaking of them, so as that they shall be removed, and pass away with a great noise; and so they interpret the next clause, of the permanency of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the immoveable kingdom of glory, and the never-fading inheritance of the saints; and of their fixed, unalterable, and unshaken state: but rather this is to be understood of Christ's coming to the destruction of Jerusalem; when there was an entire removal of the Jewish state, both political and ecclesiastical; and of the whole Mosaic economy; and of things appertaining to divine worship, which were made with hands, as the temple, and the things in it; and which were made to be removed; for they were to continue no longer than the time of reformation: and this removing of them designs the abolition of them, and entire putting an end to them; at which time, not only their civil government was wholly put down, but their ecclesiastic state also; for the place of their worship was destroyed, the daily sacrifice ceased, and the old covenant, and the manner of administering it, vanished away; and all the legal institutions and ordinances which were abolished by the death of Christ, were no more performed, in Jerusalem; the temple, and temple-service perishing together.

That those things which cannot be shaken may remain] The kingdom and priesthood of Christ, which are everlasting; and the good things which come by him, as remission of sins, justification, adoption, sanctification, and the heavenly in-

VOL. V.

heritance; as also the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of it, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and the mode of Gospel-worship; all which are to continue until Christ's second coming.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved] Not the kingdom of glory; eternal glory is a kingdom, and it is an immoveable one; and is a free gift of God, and may be said to be now received; God's people are called unto it, and are made meet for it, and have a right unto it, and have it in faith and hope, and in Christ their head and representative: but the kingdom of grace, under the Gospel-dispensation, is meant: there are several things in this dispensation which are called a kingdom, as a Gospel-church, the Gospel itself, and the privileges and blessings of grace bestowed, especially spiritual and internal ones, *Matt. xxv. 1. Luke xvi. 16. Rom. xiv. 17.* and the whole dispensation is called *the kingdom of heaven*, *Matt. iii. 2. and chap. iv. 17.* Christ he is king, believers are his subjects, the Gospel is his sceptre, and the ordinances are his laws and appointments; and all are immoveable; and a man may be said to receive this kingdom, when he is delivered from the power of darkness, is regenerated, and has the blessings of grace actually bestowed on him, and is brought to Zion.

Let us have grace] By which is meant, not thankfulness for so great a blessing, though this is highly requisite and necessary; nor the favour of God, though as the reception of the kingdom springs from hence, a sense of it ought to abide; nor the habit or principle of grace in the heart, unless particularly the grace of faith, and the exercise of it, should be designed; but rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, is intended; and the sense is, *ἔχουσιν*, "let us hold it," as the Ethiopic version renders it; let us hold the Gospel fast, and a profession of it: the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "we have grace;" this goes along with the immoveable kingdom; all that have truly received the one, have the other.

Whereby we may serve God] God is to be served, and not a creature, nor the elements of this world, the ceremonial law, and its rites; nor is he to be served in any form, only in a spiritual way; and without holding to the Gospel, there is no serving him in an evangelic manner; the true and right way of serving him is as follows.

U

Accept-

Acceptably] In Christ, in the Gospel of his Son, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God.

With reverence] Of the majesty of God, with shame for sin, and with a sense of unworthiness.

And godly fear] Which has God for its author and object; and which springs from his grace, and is increased by discoveries of his goodness; and which is consistent with faith and spiritual joy; see *Psaln* ii. 11. and v. 7.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Either God personally considered, God in the person of Christ; so the *Shekinah*, with the Jews, is called "a consuming fire (*n*)."^(*) Christ is truly God, and he is our God and Lord; and though he is full of grace and mercy, yet he will appear in great wrath to his enemies, who will not have him to reign over them: or rather God essentially considered; whose God he is, and in what sense, and how he comes to be so, see the note on chap. viii. 10: what is here said of him, that he is a *consuming fire*, may be understood of his jealousy in matters of worship, *Deut.* iv. 23, 24. and so carries in it a reason why he is to be served acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. God, and he only, is to be worshipped; and he is to be worshipped in a way suitable to himself; and he has the sole right of fixing the manner of worship, both as to the external and internal parts of it: under the legal dispensation, he was worshipped in a way he then pitched upon, and suitable to it; and under the Gospel-dispensation he is to be worshipped in an evangelical way; and he is to have all the glory in every part of worship; and the ordinances of Gospel-worship are immovable; nor are they to be altered, or others put in their room, without incurring his displeasure. Moreover, this phrase may be expressive of the preservation of his people, and of the destruction of their enemies, *Deut.* ix. 1—3. We commonly say, that God out of Christ is a *consuming fire*; meaning, that God, as an absolute God, is full of wrath and vengeance; and it is a truth, but not the truth of this text; for here it is *our God*, our covenant-God, our God in Christ; not that he is so to the saints, or to them that are in Christ: he is indeed as a wall of fire in his providences, to protect and defend them, and as fire in his word to enlighten and warm them, to guide and direct them, but not a consuming fire to them; this he is to their enemies, who are as thorns, and briars, and stubble before him: and so the Jews

interpret *Deut.* iv. 24. of a fire consuming fire (*v*); and observe, that Moses says, *thy God*, and not *our God* (*p*); but the apostle here uses the latter phrase.

C H A P. XIII.

The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, closes it with practical exhortations to these Hebrews, puts up prayers for them, and sends salutations to them. The exhortations are to brotherly love, and the continuance of it, *1.* to hospitality, by which some have entertained angels unawares, *2.* to sympathy with those that are in bonds, and in afflictions, *3.* to purity and chastity in the honourable state of marriage, urged by the judgment of God on unclean persons, *4.* to avoid covetousness, and to be content with present things, enforced by the promises of God, which give boldness and strength to faith, *5, 6.* to remember their spiritual guides and governors, the preachers of the Gospel to them; to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation, which is Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, *7, 8.* And then he cautions them from being carried about with the doctrines of men, which are divers and strange; which he urges from the profitable effect of the Gospel to establish the heart, and from the unprofitableness of meats to legal worshippers, and from the Christians having an altar, which is Christ, which those who are seeking life by the service of the law have nothing to do with, *9, 10.* And this he illustrates in the type of burnt-offerings, which were burnt without the camp, and there was nothing left for the priests to eat of, *11.* In like manner Christ, the antitype, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for the sanctification of his people by his blood; and who only, and not those who seek for righteousness by the law, have an interest in, *12.* However, it becomes the saints to quit every thing, and all dependence on themselves, and fellowship with others, and go forth to Jesus, believing in him, whatsoever reproach they suffer on his account; for here is nothing permanent and durable in this world; but there is a state of happiness to come, which will last for ever, *13, 14.* And since Christ has offered himself for his people, they ought to offer up the sacrifices of praise to God by him, and to do acts of beneficence

(*) Tzeror Hammer, fol. 21. 4.

(v) Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3. & 51. 1. & in Exod. fol. 92. 1. & in Lev. fol. 11. 1. (p) Lexic. Cabalist. p. 122.

cence and goodness, which are sacrifices well-pleasing to God, through him, *y.* 15, 16. And to these exhortations the apostle adds others; as to obey their spiritual rulers and governors, and submit unto them; since they watch for their souls, and must give an account, which to do with joy, and not with grief, is best and most profitable, *y.* 17. and to pray for the apostle, and other ministers, since they had a good conscience, and were willing to live honestly; and the rather, that he might be restored to them the sooner, *y.* 18, 19. and to engage them to this their duty, he sets them an example, by putting up prayers for them, *y.* 20, 21. and desires them to take in good part the letter he had wrote unto them, *y.* 22. and acquaints them, that Timothy was set at liberty, with whom he hoped to see them in a short time, *y.* 23. and then closes the epistle with his own, and the salutations of others, and with his usual benediction, *y.* 24, 25.

LET brotherly love continue.

The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, "in you; or among you," as a church and society of christians; for this is not to be understood of love to all mankind, or to those of the same nation, or who are in a strict natural relation brethren, though they are all in a sense brethren, and to be loved; but of love to those who are in the same spiritual relation to God, as their Father, to Christ, as the first-born among many brethren; and are in the same church-state, at least partakers of the same grace: and which love ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, and be fervent and unfeigned, and as Christ hath loved us; and when it is genuine, it is active and laborious, and shews itself in praying with, and for one another; in bearing one another's burdens; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in admonishing one another in love; in building up each other in the most holy faith; and in stirring up one another to the several duties of religion: and without this excellent and useful grace, a profession of religion is in vain; this is an evidence of regeneration; it is the bond of perfectness, and what renders the saints communion delightful and edifying: many are the arguments moving to the exercise of it; as the love of God, and Christ; the new commandment of Christ; the relation saints stand in to one another; the comfort and joy of Gospel-ministers, and our own peace and edification: and this should continue; for the love of God and Christ continues; the relation between the saints con-

tinues; and without this, churches cannot continue long: the apostle means, not the grace itself, the internal principal, for that where it once is always continues, and can never be lost; but the exercise and increase of it, an abounding in it yet more and more. One of the Jewish prayers is to this purpose (*q*): "He that dwells in this house, let him plant among you *אמון ואהבה* brotherhood and love, (or brotherly love) peace and friendship."

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers] By whom are meant, not unconverted men, who are strangers to God and Christ, and the covenants of promise; nor saints, who are as pilgrims and strangers in this world; but such as are of another country, and are unknown; and even though wicked men, they are not excluded; though such as are obliged to quit their own country for righteousness sake, are chiefly designed; all strangers in distress are meant, and hospitality is to be exercised towards them; which lies negatively in doing nothing to distress them, and positively in providing food, raiment, lodging, &c. for them, and in comforting, counselling, and directing them in all matters in which they may stand in need thereof: and that this is a duty, appears from the light of nature, and the practice of the heathens, *Acts* xxviii. 2, 7. from the express law of God, *Deut.* x. 19. and many others made in favour of strangers, binding on the Jews; from the sundry exhortations to it in the New Testament, *Rom.* xii. 13. *1 Peter* iv. 9. and from the exhortation here, not to forget it; and from the great regard which Christ will shew to such as mind it, and his disregard to others at the last day: the persons who are to exercise it, are not only the ministers of the Gospel, who should be given to hospitality; but all the saints, even the meaner sort are not exempted, but should use it according to their ability; though it is chiefly binding on those that are rich. And this should not be forgot, but pursued and followed after; it should be frequently performed; men should be given and used to it; it should be done without grudging, and in a friendly and loving manner.

For thereby some have entertained angels unawares] As Abraham, *Gen.* xviii. 1—8. he knew them not to be angels at first; they appeared as men, and he treated them as such; but they were angels, yea,

(q) T. Hierol. Beracot, fol. 3. g.

yea, one of them was *Jehovah* himself; and hereby he received many favours, *Y. 10, 17, 23, 33.* and Lot, *Gen. xix. 1—3.* who knew not that they were angels, he took into his house; but they were, and he was delivered by them from the burning of Sodom; yea, some have un-awares, this way, entertained Christ himself, *Luke xxiv. 15—31.* and indeed, entertaining of his members is entertaining of him, *Matt. xxv. 38, 40.* It is an observation of a Jewish writer (r) upon the first of these instances; "From hence we learn, says he, how great is the strength (or virtue) of the reception of travellers (or hospitality) as the Rabbins of blessed memory say, greater is, חכמה ודרכי "hospitality," than the reception of the face of the Shekinah." And this is said to be one of the six things which a man enjoys the fruit of in this world, and for which there remains a reward in the world to come (s).

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Remember them that are in bonds] Not for criminal actions, or for debt, though such should be remembered, and pity shewed them, especially the latter; but such as are in bonds for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. This has been often the lot of God's people, who should be remembered, by praying for them, sending comfortable letters to them, personally visiting them, and relieving them under their distresses.

As bound with them] As if it were so, as if in the same condition and circumstances; by sympathizing with them; by considering themselves liable to the same bonds; by dealing with them, as it would be desirable to be dealt with in the same case.

And them which suffer adversity] Outward afflictions of body, distress for want of temporal mercies, food and raiment, and persecution by enemies; or spiritual adversity, as the prevailings of corruptions, and particularly unbelief, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan.

As being yourselves also in the body] As if in their bodies, enduring the same things; or as being afflicted in the body with diseases, necessities, and persecutions; or as being in the body, the church, of which these afflicted ones are a part, and therefore should have a fellow-feeling with

them; or rather, as being in this world, in the flesh, or in a body and state, subject to the like adversities, temporal and spiritual.

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Marriage is honourable in all] Some read these words as an exhortation, "Let it be so;" others as an assertion, "It is so." Marriage is the conjunction of one man and one woman in wedlock, whereby they become one flesh; it is a joining together of male and female in this relation, and of two only, and of such as are not within the degrees of blood forbid by the law, *Lev. xvi. 6—18.* and of such as are fit for marriage: and this is *honourable*, as it was instituted by God, and has been honoured with the presence of Christ, *Gen. ii. 22, 24. John ii. 1—11.* And it is so in the ends of it, being to procreate children, multiply the earth, build up families, preserve a legitimate offspring, and prevent fornication, and all uncleanness; and it is so, when the duties of the relation are performed on both sides: and it is *honourable in all*; in all things, in all respects, upon all accounts; "every way," as the Arabic version renders it; or as the Ethiopic version, "every where;" it has been honourably esteemed of among all nations; it becomes persons of all ranks and degrees, quality, and order; and it is honourable in all that are lawfully married, and do not violate the marriage-contract, or defile the marriage-bed: hereby are condemned, such who despise marriage, that they may give a loose to their wandering and unsatiable lusts; and such who, under a pretence of greater sanctity and perfection, reject it as unlawful; and the Papists, who deny it to men employed in sacred work.

And the bed undefiled] The Arabic version reads, *his bed*; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, *their bed*; the bed of such whose marriage is honourable; which is not polluted by admitting others into it, or by acts of fornication and adultery.

But] Or for, as the Alexandrian copy reads,

Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge] The former of these may be rendered *fornicators*, as it is by the Vulgate Latin version: fornication is a sin committed by single persons, unmarried ones; and though it was reckoned among the Gentiles a thing indifferent, yet is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the flesh, and makes unfit for the kingdom of God, and brings down the judgments of God both here and hereafter. And this is in opposition to marriage, which is appoint-

(r) R. Abraham Seba in *Tzeror Hammor*, fol. 18. 4.

(s) T. Bab. *Subbat*, fol. 127. 1.

ed to prevent it. The sin *adulterers* are guilty of, is a sin committed by persons, who are either one or both in a married state, and so is directly a pollution of the marriage-bed: this was punishable with death by the law of God, and light of nature; and though men may make light of it, God will judge and punish such as commit it, both in this life, with diseases, poverty and disgrace, and in the world to come, at the great day of account; for however secretly it may be committed, God, who is omniscient, sees it, and will bring it into judgment; nor shall any be able to escape the righteous judgment of God, for he is omnipotent as well as omniscient. The Jews say, "Whoever lies with another man's wife, shall not escape, *וְיָמָּוּת* " the judgment, " or damnation of hell (1)."

5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

Let your conversation be without covetousness] Which is an immoderate desire of riches, an over-anxious care for worldly things, attended with dissatisfaction, and discontent with their present state: it discovers itself many ways; in preferring the world to religion; in laying up treasure for a man's own self, without being any ways useful to others; in withholding from himself the necessities of life, and in making no use of his substance for the glory of God, and the interest of religion: this is a very great evil; it is called *idolatry*, and is said to be the root of all evil; and is very pernicious to true religion: a believer's conversation should be without it; in his family, for whom he should provide things convenient and honest; and in the world, where he should deal uprightly, and not defraud and overreach; and in the church, where he should be liberal, and generously communicate, upon all occasions; and such a conversation is becoming the Gospel, which is a declaration of things freely given to us of God. The reason of the apostle's mentioning this sin of covetousness is, because the Jews were prone to it, and these believing Hebrews might be inclined to it, and be dissatisfied with their present condition, in which they suffered the spoiling of their goods; and besides, unless this was avoided, the above-mentioned duties could not be performed aright, as brotherly love, hospitality, remembering and relieving persons in bonds, and adversity.

And be content with such things as ye have] Or

"with present things;" with present riches, or with present poverty; with present losses and crosses; with present reproaches and afflictions; and contentment with these things shews itself, by thankfulness for every mercy, and by submission to the will and providence of God in every state of life: and there are many things which may move and engage unto it; as the consideration of the state and condition men are in, when they come into the world, and will be when they go out of it; the will of God, and the disposition of his providence according to it, which is unalterable; a sense of their own unworthiness; a view of interest in God and Christ; and an eye to the recompence of reward; as well as the many promises of God to support and supply his: and among the rest, what follows,

For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee] Which is a promise made to Joshua, and belongs to all believers, *Josh. i. 5.* which may regard things temporal; as that God will not leave his people in the hands of their enemies, nor forsake them in distress, nor withhold any good thing from them needful for them; but will supply them with the necessities of life, with which they should be content: and this passage is very pertinently cited for this purpose, and could be easily understood in this sense by the Hebrews; for the Jews explain such places as speak of God's not forsaking men, of the sustenance of them, as *Psalms xxxvii. 25.* and observe that the word *עִזְבָה* "forsaking," is never used but with respect to, *מִיִּסְדָּהּ* "sustenance (u):" though the words may also relate to things spiritual, as that God will not leave them to themselves, to their own corruptions, which would overpower them; nor to their own strength, which is but weakness; nor to their own wisdom, which is folly; nor to Satan and his temptations, who is an over-match for them; nor to the world, the frowns and flatteries of it, by which they might be drawn aside; nor will he leave them destitute of his presence; for though he sometimes hides his face, and withdraws himself, yet not wholly, nor finally; nor will he forsake the work of his own hands in them, but will perform it until the day of Christ: he will not leave or forsake them, so as that they shall perish; he will not forsake them in life, nor at death, nor at judgment.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

So

(1) T. Rab. Sots, fol. 4. 2.

(u) Berekht Rabba, §. 69. fol. 61. 4. Vajikra, §. 35. fol. 175. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 103. 2.

So that we may boldly say] Or confidently assert; for nothing is more true than this,

The Lord is my helper] He is able to help, and does help, when none else can; he has promised to be the helper of his people; he has laid help for them on Christ, who is mighty; and he has helped him as man, that he might help them; he has set up a throne of grace for them to come to, where they may find help; and experience confirms the truth of this assertion; every believer can set up an Ebenezer, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me:" the people of God are of themselves helpless ones; there is no help for them in man; their help is only in the Lord; who helps them out of the pit of sin and misery; out of the hands of all their enemies; out of all their afflictions, and out of all the dangers they are exposed unto, by Satan and his temptations, by reason of a body of sin and death, and on account of the world, and the men of it: he helps them in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; in bearing the cross; in fighting the Lord's battles; and in their journeying through the wilderness: he helps them to temporal blessings, and spiritual ones; to spiritual food and raiment, and to all needful supplies of grace, and at last, to eternal glory and happiness: and the help he now affords is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, and is what is sufficient; and is sometimes with, and sometimes without means.

And I will not fear what man shall do unto me] There is a becoming fear and reverence which is due to men that are our superiors, whether in civil or religious affairs; but men are not to be feared when opposed to God; not a single man only is not to be feared, but even all men; and not they only, but all that they can do; the utmost of which is to kill the body; the ground of this fearlessness in believers, are the infinite power, grace, and goodness of God. The words seem to be taken out of *Psalms* liv. 4. and lvi. 4. and cxviii. 6.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation:

Remember them which have the rule over you] Christ's church is a kingdom, and he is king in it; pastors of churches are subordinate governors; who rule well, when they rule, not in an arbitrary way, according to their own wills, but according to the laws of Christ, with all faithfulness, prudence, and diligence. The word may

be rendered guides or leaders; for such point out the way of peace, life, and salvation to men, and direct them to Christ; and guide them into the understanding of the scriptures, and the truths of the Gospel; and lead them in the paths of faith and holiness, and are examples to them. The Greek word here used, is what the Jews call christian bishops by; and *ἐπίσκοπος* is, by Maimonides (*w*), said to be the same as *מקור* "a bishopric;" to remember them is to know, own, acknowledge, and respect them as their governors; to obey them, and submit to them; to treasure up in memory their doctrines and exhortations; to be mindful of them at the throne of grace, to pray for them; and to take care of their maintenance and outward supply of life.

Who have spoken unto you the word of God] Of which God is the author, being agreeable to the scriptures, given by inspiration of God; the subject of which is the love and grace of God in Christ; and which God makes useful for conversion and comfort; and which, when spoken aright, is spoken freely, boldly, and faithfully.

Whose faith follow] Or imitate; meaning either their faithfulness, by owning the truths and ordinances of the Gospel before men; by reproving fellow-christians in love; by discharging the several duties of their place in the church; and by performing the private duties of life: or the grace of faith, their strong exercise of it, together with its fruits and effects, love and good works; also the profession of their faith, which they hold fast unto the end: and the doctrine of faith, by embracing the same, as it appears agreeable to the word; by abiding by it, standing fast in it, striving for it, and persevering in it to the end.

Considering the end of their conversation] Which may intend the whole of their conduct in the discharge of the several duties of their office: the end of which designs either the manner of it, as De Dieu explains it, agreeable to the sense of the Hebrew word *תורת* in *Psalms* lxxviii. 20. or the drift and scope of it, which was Christ, his honour and glory, as in connection with the following verse; or the event of it in life, being for the glory of God, and the good of men; or rather the issue of it in death, or what a comfortable end they made; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "considering their last manner of living, in their exit out of the world;" and this is to be considered for imitation and encouragement.

8 Jesus

(w) In Misg. Cittin, c. 1. §. 1.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Who is the substance of the word spoken by the above-mentioned rulers, the author and object of the faith, and the end in which their conversation terminated. These words may be expressive of the duration of Christ: he was *yesterday*, which does not design the day immediately foregoing, nor some little time past, but ancient times, formerly, of old; and though it does not extend to eternity, which is true of Christ, yet may be carried further than to the days of his flesh here on earth, even to the whole Old Testament dispensation; yea, to the beginning of the world, when he existed not only as the eternal Word, the everlasting I AM, but as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; during which dispensation he frequently appeared in an human form, and was the sum of all promises and prophecies, and the substance of all types and shadows, and the spiritual food of his people: and he is *to-day*, under the Gospel-dispensation; in his person as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, priest, and king; and will be so *for ever*: he will never die more; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his priesthood an unchangeable one. Moreover, these words may regard the immutability of Christ; who is unchangeable in his person, perfections, and essence, as God; and in his love to his people; and in the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, and in the virtue of his sacrifice and righteousness: it may be observed, that *ο αὐτός*, translated *the same*, answers to *אני הוה*, a name of God, Psalm cii. 27. *Isa.* xlviii. 12. and which is used in Jewish writings (x) for a name of God; and so it is among the Turks (y): and it is expressive of his eternity, immutability, and independence; and well agrees with Christ, who is *God over all, blessed for ever*.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines] The word *divers* may denote the variety and multitude of other doctrines; referring either to the various rites and ceremonies of the law, or to the traditions of the elders, or to the several doctrines of men, whether Jews or Gentiles;

whereas the doctrine of the scriptures, of Christ, and his apostles, is but one; it is uniform, and all of a piece; and so may likewise denote the disagreement of other doctrines with the perfections of God, the person and offices of Christ, the scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, and even with themselves: and *strange doctrines* may design such as were never taught by God, nor are agreeable to the voice of Christ, nor to be found in the word of God; and which are new, and unheard of by the apostles and churches of Christ; and appear in a foreign dress and habit: wherefore, the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, not to be *carried about* with them, as light clouds and meteors in the air, by every wind: for so to be, is to be like children; and discovers great ignorance, credulity, levity, inconstancy, uncertainty, fluctuation, and inconsistency.

For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace] With the doctrine of grace, which is food for faith, and does not leave men at uncertainties, about things; but establishes the heart, with respect to the love and favour of God, and builds souls upon the foundation, Christ; so that they are not at a loss about the expiation of sin; justification and salvation; but firmly look for, and expect, eternal happiness by Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Not with meats] Referring to the distinction of meats among the Jews; or the sacrifices eat both by the priests and by the people; or the whole ceremonial law, which stood in divers meats and drinks.

Which have not profited them that have been occupied therein] They were only profitable to the body; and could be of no other use to the soul, when they were in force, than as they led to Christ, and were regarded by believers; for they were of no advantage to hypocrites and carnal men; they could not sanctify, nor justify, nor cheer the spirits, nor establish the heart; and are of no manner of service at all, since the death of Christ, whereby the whole ceremonial law is abolished.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

We have an altar] By which is meant, not the cross of Christ, on which he was crucified; nor the Lord's table, where his flesh and blood are presented to faith, as food, though not offered; but Christ himself, who is altar, sacrifice, and priest: he was typified by the altar of the burnt-offering, and the sacrifice that was offered upon it; the altar was made of Shittim wood,

(x) Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 1. & 4. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Ed. Amstelod. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Maimon. in M. fin. Sucra, c. 4. §. 5. (y) Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 40.

wood, and covered with brass, denoting the incorruptibleness, duration and strength of Christ: the horns of it, at the four corners, were for refuge; whoever fled to it, and laid hold on them, were safe; so Christ is a refuge to his people, that come from the four corners of the earth; and who believe in him, and lay hold on him, are preserved and protected by his power and grace: the use of it was for sacrifice to be offered upon it; which being a male, without blemish, and wholly burnt with fire, was a sweet savour to God; and which was typical of Christ's human nature, offered on the altar of his divine nature; which was pure and holy, suffered the fire of divine wrath, and was for a sweet smelling savour to God: this altar was but one, and most holy, and sanctified what was put upon it; all which is true of Christ: now this altar the saints have, and have a right to eat of it; even all Christ's friends and beloved ones; all that are made priests unto God by him; all that know him, believe in him, have a spiritual discerning of him, and hunger and thirst after him.

Whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle] There is something of this altar, or that was offered up upon this altar, that is to be eat, even the flesh and blood of Christ; and to eat of it, is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is become an offering for sin, and for us that eat; it is to receive, embrace, and possess the blessings, procured by it; which is done by faith, with spiritual joy and gladness, and with sincerity and singleness of heart: now those who served the tabernacle, or adhered to the service of the ceremonial law, they had no right to eat of this altar: the allusion is to the priests eating of the sacrifices, and to some sacrifices, of which they might not eat, *Lev. ii. 10.* and chapters vi. 16, 18, 26, 29. and vii. 9. and xvi. 27. and this is not to be understood of believers before the coming of Christ, who did attend tabernacle-service; for they eat the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink, as believers do now; but of such, who obstinately persisted in the ceremonies of the law, when they were abolished; and so cut off themselves from all right to the substance of these shadows. See *Gal. v. 2, 3, 4.*

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

For the bodies of those beasts] Not the red heifer, *Numb. xix.* nor the sin-offering in general, *Lev. vi. 30.* nor those for the priest and people, *Lev.*

iv. 11, 12. and chap. xxi. 6, 7, 18. but the bullock and goat on the day of atonement, *Lev. xvi. 11—18, 27.* which were typical of Christ, in the bringing of their blood into the most holy place by the high priest for sin; and in the burning of them without the camp: these beasts were slain, their blood was shed, and was brought into the most holy place, by the high priest; and was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and the horns of the altar of incense; and by it atonement was made for the priest, his house, and all Israel: which was a type of the death of Christ; the shedding of his blood; the carrying of it into heaven; the sprinkling it upon the throne of grace and mercy; by which reconciliation is made for the sins of all God's people.

Whose blood is brought into the sanctuary] That is, into the holy of holies, as the Ethiopic version renders it.

By the high priest for sin] To make atonement for it, for his own, and for the sins of his family, and of all Israel.

Are burned without the camp] *Lev. xvi. 27.* Even their skins, flesh, and dung; and the men that burnt them were unclean, though upon being washed were received: which was typical of the dolorous sufferings of Christ without Jerusalem, as the next verse shews; and points out the extent of his sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, and even to his soul; and expresses, not only the pains, but the shame and reproach he endured, signified by the burning of the dung; and hints at the pardon of the wicked Jews, who were concerned in his sufferings; which was applied unto them upon their repentance.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Wherefore Jesus also] In order to answer the type of him.

That he might sanctify the people with his own blood] By the people, are meant the people who are the objects of divine love and favour; a chosen and covenant people; a distinct and peculiar people; Christ's own special people, by the gift of his Father to him: and the sanctification of them does not design the internal sanctification of them, though this is from Christ, and in consequence of his blood; nor does it so much regard the cleansing of the filth of sin, though Christ's blood sanctifies, in this sense; but rather the expiation of the guilt of sin, which Christ has fully took away; complete pardon being procured, and a perfect righteousness brought in; and this by his own blood; the priests sanctified to the purifying

ing of the flesh with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Christ, with his own blood, which he was really a partaker of; and his human nature being in union with his divine person, as the Son of God, it had a virtue in it to sanctify and cleanse from all sin, and to make full expiation of it; in shedding of which, and sanctifying with it, he has shewn great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeably to the types of him on the day of atonement, he

Suffered without the gate] That is, of Jerusalem: the Syriac version reads, "without the city;" meaning Jerusalem; which answered to the camp of Israel in the wilderness; without which the bodies of beasts were burnt on the day of atonement: for so say (x) the Jews; "As" was the camp in the wilderness, so was the "camp in Jerusalem; from Jerusalem to the mountain of the house, was the camp of Israel; from the mountain of the house to the gate of Nicanor, was the camp of the Levites; and from thence forward, the camp of the Shechinah, or the Divine Majesty:" and so Josephus (a) renders the phrase, *without the camp*, in Lev. xvi. 27. by α τῆς πόλεως, "in the suburbs;" that is, of Jerusalem, where Christ suffered.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp] Either of legal ceremonies, which are to be quitted; or of this world, which may be compared to a camp, for its instability, a camp not being always in one place; and for its hostility, the world being full of enemies to Christ and his people; and for the noise and fatigue of it, it being a troublesome and wearisome place to the saints, abounding with sins and wickedness; as also camps usually do: and for multitude, the men of the world being very numerous: and a man, may be said to go forth from hence, when he professes not to belong to the world; when his affections are weaned from it; when the allurements of it do not draw him aside; when he forsakes, and suffers the loss of all for Christ; when he withdraws from the conversation of the men of it, and breathes after another world; and to go forth from hence unto him, unto Christ, shews, that Christ is not to be found in the camp, in the world; he is above, in heaven, at the right hand of God; and, that going out of the camp externally, or leaving the world only in a

way of profession, is of no avail, without going to Christ: yet, there must be, a quitting of the world, in some sense, or there is no true coming to Christ, and enjoyment of him; and Christ is a full recompence for what of the world may be lost by coming to him; wherefore, there is great encouragement, to quit the world, and follow Christ: now to go forth to him, is to believe in him; to hope in him; to love him; to make a profession of him, and follow him.

Bearing his reproach] Or reproach for his sake: the reproach which saints meet with for the sake of Christ, and a profession of him, is called *his*, because of the union, there is between them, and the sympathy and fellow-feeling, he has with them in it; he reckons what is said and done to them, as said and done to himself; and, besides, there is a likeness between the reproach which Christ personally bore, and that which is cast upon his followers; and this is to be bore, by them, willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

For here have we no continuing city] Neither for religious worship, the city of Jerusalem being quickly to be destroyed, nor for civil life, to dwell in; and so may have a peculiar regard to the Hebrews, whose temple and city would, in a short time, become desolate; though it was the general case of the saints, in those times, to be obliged to flee from one city to another, having no certain dwelling-place: and it may respect the common instability of this world, and of the state of the saints in it: this world, and all things in it, are unstable, and transitory, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it, and the persons in it, and even the world itself; the fashion of it passes away: the saints have no settlement and abiding here; they are not of it, though in it; and though they are in it, it is but for a time; and, when they have done the will of God they are taken out of it; another place is prepared for them; they are but sojourners, and strangers, and pilgrims; and this they are sensible of, and own, and acknowledge: and it is their mercy that they are not to continue here; since, whilst in it, they are exposed to a great many sorrows and afflictions, both of soul and body; are often disturbed with Satan's temptations; and are liable to the snares, insults, and reproaches of the world; and, seeing they have no continuance here, they will be the sooner at home: and they have that to support them under the instability of worldly things, which others have not; they are interested in an

(x) T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 126. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 7. fol. 185. 3, 4. Matmon. Beth Habbachira, c. 7. §. 11.

(a) Antiqu. l. 3. c. 20. §. 3.

unchangeable God, and in his love; and in an unchangeable Saviour; and in an unchangeable covenant; and have a right to eternal glory and happiness, a city, which has foundations, as follows.

But we seek one to come] Heaven, which is compared to a city; is future, yet to come; though certain, being built and prepared by God; and is continuing, will abide, being well founded: hence the saints seek for it: see the note on chapter xi. 10.

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise] For temporal and spiritual mercies; particularly for sanctification, or expiation of sin, by the blood of Christ; and for heaven, the continuing city, that is to come: this sacrifice is not a proper, nor a propitiatory one, but spiritual and evangelical; it is enjoined by God, is well-pleasing to him, and glorifies him; and is our reasonable service, that believe in Christ; for being made priests by him to God, and having faith in him, such are capable of offering it aright; to do which, they are under the greatest obligations: and it is to be offered up by Christ, who is the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever; and who has suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify the people by his blood: it is to be done, in imitation of him, and by his assistance; and for him, and blessings in him; and on him, as the altar, which sanctifies the gift; and, through him, as the high priest and mediator; for, as there is no coming to God, but by Christ, and all our mercies come to us, through him, and our thank-givings are only acceptable to God on his account, it must be right to offer them up by him: and that,

To God continually] As the Creator and Preserver of us in our beings; as the Father of mercies; as the Father of Christ; and as our covenant-God and Father in him; since he is always bestowing mercies on us, of one kind or another; and, therefore, should be continually praised, even in times of adversity, affliction, and temptation; in the midst of reproach and persecution; even, when unsettled in mind, body, and estate; since there is a continuing city to come; nor can a believer be in any state of life, but he has something to be thankful for.

That is, the fruit of our lips] The sacrifice of praise is so called, in allusion to the offering of

the first-fruits under the law; and to distinguish it from legal sacrifices; and to shew, in what way and manner we are to praise God, namely, with our lips: in *Hosea* xiv. 3. which is thought to be referred to here, it is, *the calves of our lips*; sacrifices of praise, being instead of calves: and the apostle interprets it, in great agreement with the Jewish writers; the Chaldee paraphrase explains it, by מלי שפוחנו "the words of their lips:" and so Jarchi, דברי שפוחנו "the words of our lips;" and Kimchi, וירי שפוחנו "the confession of our lips;" and it may be observed, that there is a great nearness in מרים *calves*, and מרי *fruit*; though perhaps rather the phrase is borrowed from *Isa.* lvii. 19. where it is expressly had; the Septuagint indeed have it in *Hosea* xiv. 3. the apostle adds, for further explanation, *giving thanks to his name*; to the name of God; to the glory of his name; to the honour of his divine perfections; for mercies of every kind: the word signifies, "a speaking together;" and may design not only the conjunction of the heart and tongue together in praise, but a social giving thanks to God by the saints, as a body; together: the phrase *δωσα αμνησις*, *the sacrifice of praise*, is used by the Septuagint in *2 Chronicles* xxix. 31. and xxxiii. 16. The apostle have shewn, that legal sacrifices were all superseded and abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, which is the design of this epistle, points out what sacrifice believers should offer up to God, under the Gospel-dispensation; and the Jews themselves say, that "in future time (that is, in the days of the Messiah) all sacrifices shall cease, but קרבן תודה קרבן תודה "the sacrifice of praise shall not cease (b)."

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

But to do good and to communicate forget not] Which is to be understood, not of doing good works in general, but of acts of beneficence, or communicating to the poor, as the Syriac version renders it: the apostle proceeds to take notice of another sort of sacrifice, which continues under the Gospel-dispensation; and that is, alms; which should be attended to: alms should be given, or beneficence be exercised to all men in need, even to our enemies, as well as to our friends and relations; and especially to poor saints, and ministers of the Gospel: and this believers should not forget; which shews that it is a duty of importance; and that men are too

apt

(b) *Vajikra Rabba*, §. 9. fol. 153. 1. & §. 27. fol. 168. 4.

apt to neglect it, and should be stirred up unto it.

For with such sacrifices God is well pleased] Not that they are meritorious of the favour of God and of eternal life; for what a man gives in a way of charity, is but what God has given him, and cannot be profitable to God, though it is to a fellow-creature; nor is there any proportion between what is given, and grace and glory which the saints receive; yet doing good in this way, when it is done in faith, springs from love, and is directed to the glory of God, is well-pleasing to him; yea, these sacrifices are preferred by him to legal ones, *Hosea* vi. 6. and the Jews also say, that "Greater is he who does alms than (if he " offered) all sacrifices (ε)."

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Obey them that have the rule over you] Not the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, for to these they were no longer obliged, they being no longer under such tutors and governors; nor civil magistrates, though it was their duty to obey them, even heathen ones; for as for christian magistrates, as yet there were none; but their spiritual guides and governors, the same that are mentioned *x. 7.* these the apostle exhorts them to obey; by constantly attending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the scriptures; for a contrary behaviour is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels and advice.

And submit yourselves] To the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; and to their censures and reproofs, as delivered by the authority of the church; for they are spiritual fathers, and children should obey their parents, and submit to them; they are the ambassadors of Christ, stand in his stead, and represent him, wherefore their authority is great; and they are pastors or shepherds of the flock, whom the sheep should follow.

For they watch for your souls, as they that must give account] They watch not for themselves, for

their worldly gain and advantage, and for the estates of men; but for the souls of men, to do them good, to comfort and edify them, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, and for the salvation of them; as such that must give an account to their own consciences, that they discharge their work aright, or they cannot be satisfied; and to the church, to whom they minister, to whom they are accountable, if they are dilatory and negligent; and especially, as such as must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and give an account to him of their ministry, of their use of talents committed to them, and of souls that are put under their care and charge; how they have discharged their duty to the souls of men, and how these have behaved towards them under the ministry of the word: the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "for they watch, " as those that must give an account for your " souls;" the sense is much the same.

That they may do it with joy, and not with grief] Either do their work with joy, cheerfully; which they do, when they are obeyed and submitted to; when men attend upon the word and ordinances administered by them, and receive advantage, and grow in grace and spiritual knowledge; when they abide by the Gospel, and walk worthy of it; otherwise they do their work heavily, and with sorrow: or else give up their account with joy, and not with grief; either at the throne of grace, where they either rejoice or complain; or at the great day, when they will be witnesses, either for, or against those that have been committed to them.

For that is unprofitable unto you] For whose souls they watch; that is, the latter would be so, either to do their work sorrowing, or to give up their account by way of complaint; either of them must be to the disadvantage of such persons that occasion grief and sorrow.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Pray for us] Who are in the ministry; your guides and governors; since the work is of so much moment, and so arduous and awful, and you have such a concern in it; see the note on *2 Thess. iii. 1.*

For we trust we have a good conscience] There is a conscience in every man, but it is naturally evil: a good conscience is a conscience sanctified by the Spirit of God, and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus; here it chiefly respects the upright discharge of it in the ministerial work; this the apostle

apostle often asserts, and appeals to, and which he here expresses with modesty, and yet with confidence; and which he uses as an argument for prayer for them.

In all things willing to live honestly] Not only as men, but as ministers; faithfully dispensing the word of truth, without any regard to the favour or frowns of men, as good stewards of the mysteries of God; which contains in it another reason for prayer: the phrase, *in all things*, is so placed, that it may be read in connection with either clause; and the sense is either that they exercised a good conscience in all things in which they were concerned with God or man, and among all persons, Jews and Gentiles; or that they were willing to live honestly in every respect, as men, christians, and ministers.

19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

But I beseech you the rather to do this] To pray earnestly; to strive together in their prayers for them, *Rom. xv. 30—32.*

That I may be restored to you the sooner] Christ's ministers are sometimes hindered from being with their people, through Satan or his emissaries creating troubles, or casting them into prison; which might be the apostle's case now; but God can make their way through all; and for this he should be prayed unto.

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Now the God of peace] This is the concluding part of the epistle, which is ended with a prayer, made up of very suitable petitions for the Hebrews; and as the apostle desires them to pray for him and other ministers, he, in turn, and by way of example, prays for them: and he addresses God, as *the God of peace*; who is so called, because of his concern in the peace and reconciliation of his people; because he is the giver of conscience-peace to them; because he is the author of all felicity and prosperity, temporal and spiritual; the promoter of peace and concord among saints, and at last brings them to eternal peace; see the note on *Rom. xv. 33.* A consideration of this gives boldness at the throne of grace; furnishes out a reason why blessings asked for may be expected; has a tendency to promote peace among brethren; may bear up saints under a sense of infirmity and imperfection in prayer and other

duties; and be an encouragement to them under Satan's temptations, and all afflictions. The Arabic version, makes *the God of peace* to be Christ himself; whereas Christ is manifestly distinguished from him in the next verse; and even in that version, reading the words thus, "Now the God of peace raised from the dead, Jesus the shepherd of the sheep, magnified by the blood of the everlasting covenant; Jesus, I say, our Lord, confirm you, &c. through Jesus Christ;" for which version there is no foundation in the original text. The God of peace is manifestly God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ his Son.

That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus] Who died for the sins of his people; was buried, and lay under the power of death for some time; but was raised from the dead by his Father, though not exclusive of himself, and the Spirit of holiness; in the same body, in which he suffered and died; as the first-fruits of his people, and as their Lord and Saviour, Head and Surety, for their justification, and as a pledge of their resurrection. The apostle addresses the God and Father of Christ in prayer, under this consideration, to observe his power and ability to help in the greatest distress, and in the most difficult and desperate case; to encourage faith and hope in him, when things are at the worst, and most discouraging; to comfort the saints under afflictions, in a view of their resurrection; to engage them to regard a risen Christ, and things above, and to expect life and immortality by him.

That great shepherd of the sheep] The people of God, whom the Father has chosen, and given to Christ; for whom he has laid down his life; and whom the Spirit calls by his grace and sanctifies; to whom Christ has a right, by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of grace: these being partakers of his grace, are called *sheep*, because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to danger; but meek and patient under sufferings; are weak and timorous of themselves; are clean, being washed in the blood of Christ; are sociable, in their communion with one another; are profitable, though not to God, yet to men; are apt to go astray, and are liable to diseases: they are also called *sheep*, and are Christ's sheep before conversion; see *John x. 16.* and Christ he is the shepherd of them, who in all respects discharges the office of a shepherd to them diligently and faithfully; see the note on *John x. 11.* here he is called, *that great shepherd*; being the man, God's fellow, equal to him, the great God and our Saviour; and having a flock which, though comparatively

paratively it is a little one, is a flock of souls, of immortal souls, and is such a flock as no other shepherd has; hence he is called the shepherd and bishop of souls: and his abilities to feed them are exceeding great; he has a perfect knowledge of them; all power to protect and defend them; a fulness of grace to supply them; and he takes a diligent care of them: and this great person so described was raised from the dead,

Through the blood of the everlasting covenant] For the sense is not, that God is the God of peace, through that blood, though it is true that peace is made by it; nor that Christ becomes the shepherd of the sheep by it, though he has with it purchased the flock of God; nor that the chosen people become his sheep through it, though they are redeemed by it, and are delivered out of a pit wherein is no water, by the blood of this covenant; but that Christ was brought again from the dead through it; and it denotes the particular influence that it had upon his resurrection, and the continued virtue of it since. The *covenant* spoken of is not the covenant of works made with Adam, as the federal head of his natural seed; there was no mediator or shepherd of the sheep that had any concern therein; there was no blood in that covenant; nor was it an *everlasting* one: nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, though possibly there may be some reference to it; or this may be opposed to that, since the blood of circumcision is often called by the Jews, *דמי* "the blood of the covenant (d):" nor the covenant on mount Sinai, though there may be an allusion to it; since the blood which was then shed, and sprinkled on the people, is called *the blood of the covenant*, Exod. xxiv. 8. but that was not an everlasting covenant, that has waxed old, and vanished away; but the covenant of grace is meant, before called the *new* and *better* covenant, of which Christ is the surety and mediator; see chapters vii. 22. and viii. 6. This is an *everlasting* one; it commenced from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, which is the rise and foundation of it; from the counsels of God of old, which issued in it; from Christ's being set up from everlasting, as the mediator of it; from the promises of it, which were made before the world began; and from the spiritual blessings of grace in it, which were given to God's elect in Christ before the foundation of it: moreover, it will endure for ever; nor will it be succeeded by any other covenant: and the blood of Christ may be called the blood of it, because the shedding of it is a principal article in it; by it the

covenant is ratified and confirmed; and all the blessings of it come through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, and even admission into heaven itself; and Christ, through it, was brought again from the dead, because by it he fulfilled his covenant-engagements, satisfied divine justice, and abolished sin, yea, death itself.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Make you perfect in every good work to do his will] The Alexandrian copy reads, "in every good work and word;" as in 2 *Thess.* ii. 17. every good work is to be done: a good work is what is done in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, and from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; and every such work should be diligently attended to; such as concern God, and are of a moral nature, or of positive institution; and such as concern each other, whether as men or christians: and the will of God is the rule of every good work, both as to matter and manner; whatever is not agreeable to the revealed will of God, let it have ever such a shew of religion and holiness in it, it is not a good work; continuance in the performance of good works, and the perfection of them, are things to be desired of God: it requires grace to perform good works, and more grace to abound in them, and to keep men from being weary in well-doing; and though the best of works are imperfect, yet perfection in them is desirable, and it is God alone that can make the saints perfect in any sense; see 1 *Peter* v. 10. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "strengthen you, or confirm you;" saints need to be strengthened with spiritual strength, to perform good works; for they are weak and feeble, and unable of themselves to do any thing spiritually good; without Christ they can do nothing, but through him strengthening them they can do all things; and they have need to be confirmed in them, that they are the will of God, and that it is their duty to regard them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, *fit you*: men are naturally unfit for good works; in order to do them aright, it is necessary that they should have knowledge of the will of God; that they be regenerated and created in Christ; that they be sanctified and cleansed, and so meet for the Master's use; that they have the Spirit of God, and strength from Christ; and that they be believers in him: nor is there

(d) T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 135. 2. & T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1.

there always a fitness in saints themselves, or a readiness to good works, only when God gives both will and power to do them; wherefore such a petition as this is very proper and pertinent; another follows, or the same carried on, and more largely expressed; though it rather seems to be a distinct one, and that in order to the former.

Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ] The good work of grace being necessary to the performance of good works; nor can any man do a good work well, unless he has the good work of grace wrought in him: grace is a work, not of man, but of God; it is an internal work, something in a man's heart, and not any thing without him, or done by him; and it is a gradual and progressive work; it is carried on by degrees, and is not yet perfect, though it will be. God is continually working in his people, carrying on his work, and will at length perform it; see the note on *Phil. i. 6.* and this is *well-pleasing in his sight*; it is in his sight; it is obvious to his view, when it is not to others, nor to themselves, being the hidden man of the heart; and it is very agreeable to him; it makes men like unto him; hereby they become a suitable habitation for him, and are put into a capacity of serving him; to such he gives more grace, and on that grace he entails glory; and all this is *through Jesus Christ*; all the grace necessary for the beginning and carrying on, and finishing of the good work of grace, and for the performance of every good work, comes through the hands of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells; and through the blood and intercession of Christ, by virtue of which it is communicated; and all become acceptable to God through him, as the persons of the Lord's people, so the grace that is wrought in them, and the works that are done by them.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen] Either to God the Father of Christ, and the Father of mercies, and God of salvation; and as he is the God of peace, and the bringer of Christ from the dead; the appointer, provider, and giver of the great shepherd; the author and finisher of all good in his people: or to Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through whom all grace and good things come; to him does this doxology of right belong; he has a glory both as God, and as Mediator; and the glory of both is to be given to him: the glory of his Deity, by asserting it: by attributing all divine perfections and works unto him; by worshipping of him, and by ascribing the efficacy of his mediatorial actions to it: and the glory of salvation and redemption is to be given to him, who alone has

obtained it; by discarding all other saviours; by trusting alone in him; by looking to him alone for peace, pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life: and this glory should be ascribed continually, for ever and ever, as it will be by angels and saints to all eternity. The word *Amen*, is added, to shew that the apostle assented to it, and wished it might be, and that he firmly believed it, and so asserted that it would be; for it is expressive of assent, asseveration, and prayer.

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

And I beseech you, brethren] The apostle closes his epistle to the Hebrews in a very tender and affectionate manner, calling them *brethren*, as he often does; and speaking to them, not in an authoritative way, nor by way of advice, but by intreaty: the reason may be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and because the Jews were not so well pleased with him, on account of his preaching down the ceremonies of the Law; though such language is used by him in other epistles; he became all things to all, that he might gain some. The subject-matter of his intreaty is, that they would

Suffer the word of exhortation] Either from one another, as to prayer, to attendance on the word and ordinances, to a regard to their lives and conversations, and to a close adherence to the Gospel, and the profession of it; or from their ministers, their guides, and governors, whose business it was to exhort them to the several duties of religion; or rather from himself: and it designs either the particular exhortation in chapter xiii. 5. or the continued exhortation to various duties in this chapter; or any, and every one throughout the epistle: and this shews that the children of God are sometimes heavy and sluggish, and need stirring up; and that there are some things often in exhortations and reproofs which are not so agreeable to the flesh, and yet ought to be taken kindly, and patiently endured: the word may be rendered, "consolation, or solace," as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and may refer to the whole of this epistle, which is of a consolatory nature: this may suggest that these Hebrews were under afflictions, and needed comfort; and yet through unbelief might be tempted to refuse the comfort administered to them; which is too often the case with God's people.

For I have written a letter unto you in few words] Or, "I have sent, or wrote to you in brief;" meaning

meaning either the exhortatory part of the epistle, which lay in few words, and chiefly in this chapter; or the whole of the epistle, which was but short in comparison of the length he might have carried it, and as the subject-matter of it might seem to require; it treating on the great doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace; things of the greatest moment and importance, and which might have been largely insisted on; but he had contracted things, and had wrote much in a little; and this he makes a reason, why they should suffer or bear with the exhortation given, since it was not pressed with a multitude of words, tiring out their patience.

23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty] This is the same person to whom the apostle Paul wrote two epistles, and whom he often calls his son, though sometimes his brother, as here, Col. i. 1. 1 *Thess.* iii. 2. of him he says, that he was set at liberty, or dismissed; either by the apostle, by whom he was sent into some parts, upon some business; or rather, was loosed from his bonds, having been a prisoner for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and it may be, a fellow-prisoner with the apostle at Rome, as Aristarchus and others were; and this very great and useful person being known, very likely, to the Hebrews, since his mother was a Jewess, and he himself was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, *Acts* xvi. 1, 2. it was a piece of good news to them to hear of his release.

With whom, if he come shortly, I will see you] By which it seems that Timothy was now absent from the apostle, but that he expected him to come in a short time; when, if he should, they would both come together, and visit the Hebrews; which looks as if the apostle was at liberty himself, or at least had some hopes of his deliverance from prison; but whether he ever had his liberty after this, and saw the Hebrews any more, cannot be said; the contrary seems most probable.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

Salute all them that have the rule over you] The pastors and officers of the church of the Hebrews; the same with those in *1*. 7, 17.

And all the saints] The several members of the church, who were set apart to holiness by God; whose sins were expiated by Christ; to whom

Christ was made sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations; to these the apostle wished all prosperity, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and he uses the word *all* in both clauses; and including every officer and member, expresses his universal love to them, whether high or low, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers.

They of Italy salute you] That is, "the brethren," as the Vulgate Latin version reads; the Italian brethren; such as were at Puteoli, and other places in that country; see *Acts* xxviii. 13, 14. Italy is a famous, and well-known country in Europe; a very fruitful and delightful one; of which, Rome, where the apostle very likely now was, is the chief city: it has been called by different names, as *Saturnia*, from Saturn; and *Aufonia*, *Ænotria*, and *Hesperia Magna*; and it had its name *Italy*, some say, from Italus, the son of Penelope and Telegonus; others, from *Italus*, a king of the Arcadians; or, as some say, the Sicilians; but, according to Timæus and Varro (n), it was so called from the multitude of oxen in it, which in the old Greek language were called *ἰταλοι*, *Italoi*, to which comes near in sound the Latin word *vituli*, used for *calves*; and Italy is frequently, by Jewish writers (o), called *אֵיטָלְיָא* "Italy of Greece;" and formerly it was inhabited by Greeks, and was called *Great Greece* (p): it is bounded on the east with the Adriatic sea; and on the west by the river Var, with the Alps, which separate France from Italy; and on the south with the Tyrrhene, or Tuscan sea, called the *lower*; and on the north, partly with the Alps, which are on the borders of Germany, and partly with the Adriatic sea, called the *higher*. There were christians in this country before the apostle Paul came to Rome, both at Rome and other places, as before observed. It is said (q), that Barnabas was first at Rome, and planted the church there; that he went round Lombardy, and lived at Milain; that in the first century, Apollinaris preached at Ravenna, and Hermagoras at Aquileia; and there were christian churches in the second century, not only at Rome, but in many other cities and places; and so likewise in the third century, as at Verona, Spoleum, Beneventum, &c. and in the fourth century, there were great numbers of churches in this country;

as

(n) Apud Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 1. Vid. Apollodor. de Orig. Deorum. l. 2. p. 101. (o) Bereshit Rabba, 5. 67.

fol. 59. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. xxvii. 19. (p) Isidor. Hispal. Orig. l. 14. c. 4.

(q) Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 2. p. 17. cent. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6.

as at Verona, and Capua, in Calabria, Campania, and Apulia; and which might be traced in following centuries.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

Which is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, *2 Theff.* iii. 17, 18. in which he wishes renewed discoveries of the love and favour of God; fresh communications of grace from Christ; an abundant supply of the Spirit of grace; an increase of internal grace and external gifts; and a continuance of the Gospel of the grace of God. *Of Amen*, see the note on *1. 21.*

¶ Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.

The subscription of this epistle is, *written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.* In the Alexandrian copy it is, "written to the Hebrews from Rome;" which is very probable, since the Italian brethren send their salutations in it; and the words, *by Timothy*, are left out; nor is it likely that it should, since it is clear, from *1. 23.* that he was absent from the apostle; and if he had sent it by him, what need was there to inform them that he was set at liberty?

The

The General Epistle of J A M E S.

THIS epistle is called *General*, because not written to any particular person, as the epistles to *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon* are; nor to any particular churches, as the epistles to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, &c. but to the believing Jews in general, wherever they were. The author of it is *James*; and whereas there were two of this name, who were the apostles of Christ; some have thought it was written by one, and some by another: some think it was written by James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, which is favoured by the Syriac version, which to this epistle, and the following, premises these words; "The three epistles of the three apostles, before whose eyes our Lord transfigured himself; that is, James, and Peter, and John." Now, that James who was present at the transfiguration of Christ, was James the son of Zebedee: but neither the time, nor occasion, nor matter of this epistle, seem to agree with him, for he was put to death by Herod, about the year forty-four, *Acts* xii. 1, 2. whereas this epistle was written, as some think, about the year sixty, or as others, sixty-three; and it seems pretty manifest, that it must be written after the Gospel had been spread in the Gentile world, and was received by the Jews, who were scattered abroad in it; and after many hypocrites had crept into the churches, and many false teachers, and vain boasters, and bad livers, had arisen among them: it seems therefore more agreeable, to ascribe this epistle to James the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called the *brother* of our Lord, and who was present at the assembly at Jerusalem, when the necessity of the Gentiles circumcision was debated, *Acts* xv. and is the same, whom Eusebius (a) calls *James the Just*, and Oblias; and who seems to have resided at Jerusalem, and to have been the bishop, or overseer of the church there; and therefore in character writes this epistle to the Jews, in the several parts of the world: nor need there be any doubt of the authenticity of it. Eusebius indeed says (b), that it had been accounted spurious by some, and that not many of the ancient writers had made mention of it: but he himself says, that it was publicly read in most churches; and certain it is, that some very early writers have respect unto it. Irenæus (c) manifestly refers to it, and so does Tertullian (d); and it is expressly mentioned by Origen (e) among the canonical books of scripture. The objections against it are of no weight, which are taken from the seeming disagreement between the apostle Paul, and the writer of this epistle, concerning the doctrine of justification; and from his calling the law, the perfect law of liberty, and insisting so much on the doctrine of works; all which will be seen to be agreeable to the other parts of scripture, and easily reconciled with them; nor is there any thing in it unworthy of an apostle and an inspired writer. The occasion of it seems to be partly the troubles and persecutions which attended the saints for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and the design of it is to encourage them to patience under them, and to wait and hope for the speedy coming of Christ; and partly the evil practices of some that boasted of their faith and knowledge, though they lived very dissolute lives, and the view of the apostle is to shew, that faith, without the fruits of righteousness, is not genuine; and he very largely in it exhorts to several duties highly becoming christians, and inveighs against several vices which were scandalous to them.

C H A P.

(a) Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 23.

(b) Ibid. & l. 3. c. 25.

(c) Adv. Hæres. l. 5. c. 1.

(d) Adv. Judæos, c. 2.

(e) Homil. 7. in Josuam, fol. 156. E.

C H A P. I.

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle instructs the saints he writes to how to behave under afflictions, and in every state of life; teaches them not to impute their sins to God, but to themselves; directs them in hearing the word, and cautions against self-deception in religion. The inscription and salutation are in *vs.* 1. in which the author of the epistle is described by his name and office; and the persons it is written to, by the tribes of Israel they belonged to, and by the condition in which they were scattered about in the world, to whom the apostle wishes all grace. And as they were in an afflicted state, he begins with an exhortation to rejoice in their afflictions; because hereby faith was tried, and that produced patience, and patience being perfect, is the way to be compleat, and want nothing, *vs.* 2—4. but if any wanted wisdom, how to behave under such exercises, he advises to apply to God for it, from whom it may be expected, since he is the giver of it, and gives it to all, and that liberally, and does not upbraid with the former conduct, *vs.* 5. but then such should ask in faith, or otherwise it cannot be thought they should receive, and besides would justly deserve the character of fluctuating and unstable persons, *vs.* 6—8. And the exhortations the apostle had given, he observes, suited all sorts of persons, poor and rich; the one who is exalted amidst his poverty, and the other who is mean, and frail, and mortal, amidst all his riches; which is illustrated by the flower of the grass falling off and perishing, *vs.* 9—11. And upon the whole, he concludes the blessedness of the man that endures affliction patiently, since a crown of life is promised him, and he will receive it, *vs.* 12. and from external temptations or afflictions, the apostle proceeds to internal ones, temptations to sin; and denies them to be of God, and imputes them to the lusts of men, and gives a very accurate account of the beginning, progress, and finishing of sin by man; and observes, that to place sin to the account of God, and not man, is a very great error, *vs.* 13—16. which he proves from the pure and holy nature of God; and from the good and perfect gifts, which all, and only come from him; and instances in regeneration, which is of his will, and by his word, and is the beginning and spring of all good in man, *vs.* 17, 18. And having mentioned the word, as a means of that grace, he gives some rules about hearing it; that it should be heard with eagerness, and received with meekness; and whatsoever is contrary thereunto should be avoided; as a forwardness to be teachers of it;

wrath and anger at the doctrines of it, which do not work the righteousness of God; and all impurity and naughtiness of the mind, which must render it inattentive to it; and the rather all this should be regarded, since the word is the engrafted word, and able to save the souls of men, *vs.* 19—21. and particular care should be had, that what is heard is put in practice, or otherwise it will be a self-deception; and such will be like a man that beholds his face in a glass, goes away, and forgets what sort of a man he is; whereas, if a man looks into the glass of the Gospel, hears the word attentively, remembers what he hears, and continues in it, he finds many blessed advantages in so doing, *vs.* 22—25. and then the apostle distinguishes between a vain religion, and a pure one; a vain religion is only a seeming one, and may be known to be so by a man's having no guard upon his tongue; wherefore if he thinks himself religious, he is mistaken, and his heart deceived, *vs.* 26. but pure and undefiled religion, which is so in the sight of God, shews itself in a holy life and conversation in general, and particularly in visiting and assisting widows and orphans in distress, *vs.* 27.

J A M E S, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James, a servant of God] That is, of God the Father; not by creation only, as every man is; nor merely by calling grace, as is every regenerate person; but by office, as a preacher of the Gospel, being one that served God in the Gospel of his Son, and was an apostle of Christ; nor is this any sufficient objection to his being one, since others of the apostles so stile themselves.

And of the Lord Jesus Christ] The Ethiopic version reads this in connection with the former clause, without the copulative *and*, *James, the servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ*; and so some consider the copulative as explanative of who is meant by God, even the Lord Jesus Christ: but it seems best to understand them as distinct; and that this apostle was not only the servant of God the Father, but of his Son Jesus Christ, and that in the same sense, referring to his office as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the word.

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad] By whom are meant believing Jews, who were of the several tribes of Israel, and which were in number *twelve*, according to the number and names of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and these were not the christian Jews, who were scattered abroad upon the persecution raised at the death

death of Stephen, *Acts* viii. 1, 4. and chap. xi. 19. but they were the posterity of those who had been dispersed in former captivities, by the Assyrians and others, and who remained in the several countries whither they were carried, and never returned. The Jews say (*f*), that the ten tribes will never return, and that they will have no part nor portion in the world to come; but these the Gospel met with in their dispersion, and by it they were effectually called and converted, and are the same that Peter writes to, *1 Peter* i. 1, 2. and *2 Peter* i. 1. and chap. iii. 1. And thus we read of an hundred and forty and four thousand sealed of all the tribes of Israel, *Rev.* vii. 4. and to these the apostle here sends

Greeting] That is, his christian salutation, wishing them all happiness and prosperity, in soul and body, for time and eternity; and it includes all that grace, mercy, and peace, mentioned in the usual forms of salutation by the other apostles. The same form is used in *Acts* xv. 23. and since it was James that gave the advice there, which the rest of the apostles and elders came into, it is highly probable that the epistles sent to the Gentiles were dictated by him; and the likeness of the form of salutation may confirm his being the writer of this epistle.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

My brethren] Not only according to the flesh, he being a Jew as they were; but in a spiritual sense, they being born again of the same grace, belonging to the same family and household of faith, and having the same Father, and being all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.

Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations] Not the temptations of Satan, or temptations to sin; for these cannot be matter of joy, but grief; these are *fiery darts*, and give a great deal of uneasiness and trouble; but afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which are so called here and elsewhere, because they are trials of the faith of God's people, and of other graces of the Spirit of God. God by these tempts his people, as he did Abraham, when he called him to sacrifice his son; he thereby tried his faith, fear, love, and obedience; so by afflictions, God tries the graces of his people; not that he might know them, for he is not ignorant of them, but that they might be made manifest to others: and these are *divers*; many are the afflictions of the righteous; through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom; it is a great fight of afflictions which they endure, as these believers did; their

trials came from different quarters; they were persecuted by their countrymen the Jews, and were distressed by the Gentiles, among whom they lived; and their indignities and reproaches were many; and their sufferings of different sorts; as confiscation of goods, imprisonment of body, banishment, scourgings, and death in various shapes: and these they *fall* into; not by chance, nor altogether at unawares, or unexpectedly; but they fell into them through the wickedness and malice of their enemies, and did not bring them upon themselves through any crime or enormity they were guilty of: and when this was their case, the apostle exhorts them to count it *all joy*, or matter of joy, of exceeding great joy, even of the greatest joy; not that these afflictions were joyous in themselves, but in their circumstances, effects, and consequences; as they tried, and exercised, and improved the graces of the Spirit, and worked for their good, spiritual and eternal; and produced in them the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and as they were attended with the presence and Spirit of God, and of glory; and as they made for, and issued in the glory of God; and because of that great reward in heaven which would follow them; see *Matt.* v. 11, 12. *1 Peter* iv. 14. The Jews have a saying (*g*), "Whoever rejoices in afflictions that come upon him, brings salvation to the world."

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Knowing this] By experience; as every one that is trained up in the school of affliction does: the apostle appeals to the saints, to whom he writes, for the truth of what he was about to say; and which he gives as a reason why they should rejoice in afflictions, because it is a known fact,

That the trying of your faith worketh patience] Two things afflictions do, when sanctified; one is, they try faith, the truth of it, and make it appear to be true, genuine, and precious, like gold tried in the fire; see *1 Peter* i. 6, 7. and the other is, that they produce patience: saints being inured to afflictions, become by degrees more patient under them; whence it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth: this phrase may be understood, both of faith, which being tried by afflictions, produces patience; for where the one is in exercise, the other is also, and both are necessary under afflictive providences; and also of afflictions, which try faith, and being sanctified by the Spirit of God, work patience, which is a fruit of the Spirit; for otherwise the effect of them

is

(*f*) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 110. 2.

(*g*) T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. 1.

is impatience; and this agrees with the apostle Paul in *Romans* v. 3, 4.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

But let patience have her perfect work] Or effect; or be brought unto perfection; which may denote both the sincerity and continuance of it unto the end, with constancy: patience may be said to be perfect, when it appears to be real and sincere, and not dissembled; for as there may be a feigned faith, a dissembled love, and an hypocritical hope, so likewise a mere shew of patience: and certain it is, that as there is a patience which is commendable, there is one that is not, *1 Peter* ii. 20. And this phrase may also design the constant exercise of this grace to the end; for he that endures, or is patient, and continues so unto the end, shall be saved, and enjoy that perfection of glory and happiness expressed in the next clause.

That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing] Which cannot be understood of the saints in this present life; only as they are in Christ, and in a comparative sense; or as perfection may denote sincerity, and uprightness; or of a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; for the saints are very imperfect in themselves, and are very far from being compleat in soul, body, and spirit; and want many things, and are wanting in many things, both in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; but when patience has had its perfect work, and has been tried to the uttermost, and is found right, and has held out to the end; then shall the saints *be perfect* in holiness and happiness, and be *entire*, whole, and compleat; as they will be in the resurrection morn, both in soul and body, and will want no good thing, and will be free from every sorrow, nor will they be deficient in any service; and to this sense agrees *1. 12.*

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.

If any of you lack wisdom] This shews, that the perfection before spoken of is not to be understood as in this life, since the apostle immediately supposes lack of wisdom in them; for this is not said in a form of doubting, whether they wanted it or not, but rather as supposing, and taking it for granted that they did; and in the first and primary sense of the words, it intends wisdom to behave aright under temptations or afflictions;

saints often want wisdom to consider God as the author of them, and not look upon them as matters of chance, or impute them merely to second causes; but to regard them as coming from the hand of God, and as his hand upon them, as Job did; who does not ascribe his calamities to the thieving Chaldeans and Sabeans, to the boisterous wind, and to the malice of Satan, but to God: they want wisdom to observe the sovereignty of God in them, and bow unto it; and be still, and know that he is God, who does all things well and wisely; and likewise to see and know that all are done in love, and in very faithfulness, and for good; as well as to see his name, to hear his rod, and him that has appointed it, his voice in it, his mind and meaning, and what he designs by it; as likewise to learn the useful lessons under it, and particularly to take the cross well, to bear it patiently, and even to count it all joy, and reckon it to be right, necessary, and useful: it requires much wisdom to learn all this, and act up to it. Moreover, this may be applied to all other cases, in which wisdom is wanted: men want wisdom to conduct them in the common affairs of life, and especially the people of God; for the children of the world are wiser in their generation for themselves and posterity, and in the management of worldly affairs, than the children of light; and also to observe the providences of God, and the footsteps of providence, and to follow them; and likewise to make a right use of providences, and behave suitably under them, and not be lifted up too much in prosperity, nor be cast down and too much distressed in adversity; but to consider, that the one is set against the other, and both work together for good. Saints have need of wisdom in things spiritual; they want more grace, which is the truest wisdom, and a larger knowledge of the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God, the hidden wisdom of God; and they lack wisdom to know how to walk towards them that are without, and towards them that are within, so as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and as this is more or less the case of every one,

Let him ask of God] Wisdom; of God the Father, who is *the only wise God*, who has abounded in creation, in providence, and above all in redemption and grace, in all wisdom and prudence; and of his Son Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, and has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; and of the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and all divine things.

That giveth to all men liberally] God is the giver

giver of all good things, in nature, providence, and grace; every good and perfect gift comes from him, and therefore he, and he only, should be applied unto: and he gives to *all men* the bounties of his providence; and to all that ask, and call upon him in sincerity, the riches of his grace; even to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, rich and poor, greater or lesser sinners; all which he gives *liberally*, readily, and at once, freely, and chearfully, and largely, and abundantly; not grudgingly, sparingly, and with a strait hand, but with an open one, and in a very extensive manner.

And upbraideth not] With former sins and transgressions, with former miscarriages and misconduct; or with former kindnesses; suggesting that he had given largely already, and his favours had been despised or abused; or he had been treated with ingratitude and neglect; in which manner sometimes men put off those that apply unto them, but so does not God; wherefore every word here used is encouraging to go to God for wisdom: yea, it follows.

And it shall be given him] God has said it, Christ has promised it, and the apostle might with certainty say it after them; and all experience confirms the truth of it; see *Matt. vii. 7, 8. John xiv. 13, 14.* and chap. xvi. 23.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

But let him ask in faith] Not only in the faith of the divine Being, that God is; but in the faith of the promises he has made; and in the faith of his power and faithfulness to perform them; and in the faith of this, that whatever is asked, according to the will of God, and is for his glory, and his peoples good, shall be given.

Nothing wavering] About the thing asked for, whether it is right, or no, to ask for it; for that should be settled before it is asked for; nor about the power of God to do it; nor about his will, in things he has declared he will do; nor about his faithfulness to his promises; nor at all questioning but what is proper, suitable and convenient will be given in God's own time and way.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed] He is troubled, restless, unquiet and impatient; and he is fickle, inconstant, unstable, and unsettled; and is easily

carried away with every wind of doctrine, temptation, and lust.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

For let not that man think] Imagine, conclude, or please himself with such thoughts.

That he shall receive any thing of the Lord] Wisdom, or any thing else, he is seeking after; for wanting faith, he has nothing to receive with; faith is the grace, which receives the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and all grace from him; which receives a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption of children, and even the everlasting inheritance; at least, the right unto it: wherefore those who have not faith, as the wavering man, cannot receive any thing.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

A double minded man] A man of two souls, or of a double heart, that speaks and asks with an heart and an heart, as in *Psalms xii. 2.* who halts between two opinions, and is at an uncertainty what to do or say, and is undetermined what to ask for; or who is not sincere and upright in his requests, who asks for one thing, and means another; and asks amiss, and with an ill design; does not call upon God in truth, and in the sincerity of his soul; draws nigh to him with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but his heart is far from him: such an one,

Is unstable in all his ways] He is confused in his mind; restless in his thoughts; unsettled in his designs and intentions; inconstant in his petitions; uncertain in his notions and opinions of things; and very variable in his actions, and especially in matters of religion; he is always changing, and never at a point, but at a continual uncertainty, both in a way of thinking and doing: he never continues long either in an opinion, or in a practice, but is ever shifting and moving.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

Let the brother of low degree] By the brother is meant, not one in a natural, but in a spiritual relation; one of Christ's brethren, and who is of that family that is named of him, of the household of faith, and is in church-communion: and whereas he is said to be of low degree, or humble, this regards not the affection of his mind, or his conduct and deportment, he being meek and lowly, and clothed with humility, as every brother is, or ought

ought to be; but his outward state and condition, being, as to the things of this world, poor, and mean in his outward circumstances, and so humbled and afflicted. This appears from the rich man, who, in the next verse, is opposed unto him, and distinguished from him; see *Psalms* lxii. 9. such an one is advised to

Rejoice in that he is exalted] Or to glory in his exaltation; in that high estate, to which he is advanced; for a person may be very low and mean, as to his worldly circumstances, and yet be very high, and greatly exalted in a spiritual sense: and this height of honour and grandeur, of which he may boast and glory amidst his outward poverty, lies in his high birth and descent; being born from above, and of God, and belonging to his family; in being an adopted son of God, and so an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, and of the heavenly inheritance and kingdom; in the present riches of grace he is possessed of, as justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace; and in the high titles he bears, as besides the new name, the name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate, even that of a son of the Lord God almighty; his being a king and a priest unto God, and for whom a kingdom, crown, and throne are prepared; and also in the company he daily keeps, and is admitted to; as of God, and Christ, and the holy angels; and this height of honour have all the saints, be they ever so poor in this world, who can vie with the greatest of princes for sublimity and grandeur.

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

But the rich, in that he is made low] That is, the rich brother; for there were rich men in the churches in those times, and which James often takes notice of in this epistle: such an one should rejoice or glory in his lowness, or low estate; in the consideration of the low estate out of which he was raised by the good providence of God, and was not owing to any merit of his; and in the low estate into which he may be at present reduced, through the violence of persecution, being stripped of all his riches for Christ's sake, of which he might make his boast, and count it his greatest glory; or in that low estate he may quickly expect he shall be brought into, either in the above manner, or by some calamity or another, and at least by death, which will put him upon a level with others: or this may have respect to the temper of his mind, which he has, through the grace of God, and the station he is in, in the

church of God, being a brother, and no more than a brother, and upon an equal foot with the meanest member in it; and which yet is matter of rejoicing, that he is one, and that he is so blessed with the grace of humility, as not to lift up himself above others, not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate; and such a deportment the apostle exhorts rich saints unto, from the consideration of the instability and inconstancy of worldly riches.

Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away] Shortly and suddenly; either he himself by death, or his riches at death, or before, and therefore are not to be gloried in; nor should the possessors of them be proud and haughty, and elate themselves with them, but should behave humbly and modestly to their fellow-creatures and christians, as knowing that in a short time they will all be upon a par, or in an equal state; see *Job* xiv. 2. *Psalms* xc. 5, 6. and cii. 11. and ciii. 15, 16. The metaphor here used is enlarged upon in the following verse, for the further illustration of the fickleness, perishing and transitory nature of earthly enjoyments.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat] As it is about the middle of the day, when it shines in its full strength, and its heat is very great and scorching, especially in the summer-season, and in hot climates.

But it withereth the grass] Strikes it with heat, causes it to shrivel, and dries it up.

And the flower thereof falleth] Drops off from it to the ground.

And the grace of the fashion of it perisheth] Its form and colour, its glory and beauty, which were pleasant to the eye, are lost, and no more to be recovered. This shews, that earthly riches, like the flower of the field, have an outward shew and glory in them, which attract the mind, and fix an attention to them for a while; they are gay and glittering, and look lovely, are pleasant to behold, and desirable to enjoy; but when the sun of persecution, or any other outward calamity arises, they are quickly destroyed, and are no more.

So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways] Riches are uncertain things now, they often make themselves wings and flee away; they are things that are not; that are not solid and substantial;

stantial; they are a vain shew: they sometimes fade away in a man's lifetime, before he dies; and he fades away, and comes to decay, amidst all the ways and means, designs and schemes, he forms and pursues, and all the actions and business he does; and if not, when he fades away, and dies amidst all his riches, his glory does not descend after him, but falls off from him, as the flower of the field, before the heat of the sun.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation] Or affliction, which is designed by temptation, as in v. 2. and the man that endures it, is he that so bears it, and bears up under it, as not to be offended at it, and stumble in the ways of Christ, and fall away from the truth, and a profession of it, as temporary believers in a time of temptation do; but manfully and bravely stands up under it, and does not sink under the weight of it, or faint on account of it; and endures afflictions in such manner as not to murmur and repine at them, but is quiet and still, and bears them patiently and constantly, and so endures to the end. Such expect afflictions, and when they come, they are not moved by them, but notwithstanding them, continue in the ways and work of the Lord; and such are happy persons; they are happy now, and shall be hereafter. Saints are happy under afflictions, and even on account of them, for they are tokens of God's love to them, and evidences of their sonship; and especially they are happy under them, when they enjoy the presence of God in them, when they are instructive to them, and are sanctified, when they learn from them the useful lessons of faith, patience, humility, and resignation to the will of God, and are made more partakers of his holiness; and they will be happy hereafter, as follows. The Jews have a saying (b) much like this, "Blessed is the man, שְׂמֵחַ עוֹמֵד בְּנִסְיוֹנוֹ" "who stands in his temptation," for there is no creature whom the holy "blessed God does not tempt."

For when he is tried] By the fire of afflictions, as gold is tried in the fire; when God hereby has tried what is in his heart, and the truth of grace in him, as faith, love, patience, &c. and has purged away his dross and tin, and has refined and purified him, as gold and silver are refined

and purified in the furnace, or fining pot: and when, being thus tried and proved, and found genuine, he comes forth as gold, after this state of temptation and affliction is over,

He shall receive the crown of life] Eternal happiness, called a *crown*, because of the glory of it, which will be both upon the bodies and souls of believers to all eternity; and as suitable to their character, they being kings, and having a kingdom and thrones prepared for them; and in allusion to the crown that was given to the conquerors in the Olympic games: and it is called a *crown of life*; because it is for life; which an earthly crown is not always; and because it lies in eternal life, and is an everlasting crown; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an incorruptible one; and differs from the corruptible crowns given to the victors in the above-mentioned games, which were made of fading herbs, and leaves of trees: and now the man that bears up under afflictions, and holds out unto the end, shall have this crown put upon him, and he shall receive it; not as merited by him, by his works or sufferings, for neither of them are worthy to be compared or mentioned with this crown of life and glory; but as the free gift of God, as it will be given him by the righteous Judge, as a reward of grace, and not of debt.

Which the Lord hath promised to them that love him] Either the Lord Jesus Christ, as in Matt. v. 10, 12. and chap. x. 22. or else God the Father; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, *God*; and the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word *Lord*, which may be supplied by the word *God*; see chapter ii. 5. and this promise he made before the world was, who cannot lie, nor deceive; and who is able to perform, and is faithful, and will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; so that this happiness is certain, and may be depended upon: besides, the promise of this crown of life is in Christ, where all the promises are yea and amen; yea, the crown itself is in his hands, where it lies safe and secure for *them that love him*; either the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, his people, his truths and ordinances, and his glorious appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. or God the Father; not that their love is the cause of this crown of life, or eternal life, for then it would not be the free gift of God, as it is said to be; nor of the promise of it, for that was made before the world was, and when they had no love unto him; but this phrase is descriptive of the persons to whom God manifests his love now, admits to near communion and fellowship with himself, makes all things, even their afflictions, to work for their good.

(b) Shemot Rabba, §. 31. fol. 133. 3.

good; and whom he will cause to inherit substance, and will fill their treasures.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Let no man say when he is tempted] Here the apostle uses the word *tempted* in another sense than he did before. Before he speaks of temptations, as matter of joy and boasting; here of temptations, which are criminal, and issue in shame and death: the temptations he before makes mention of, being patiently endured, denominate men happy; but here such are designed, which are to be deprecated, and watched against: before he treats of temptations, which were the means of trying and exercising grace, and of purging away the dross of sin and corruption; but here of temptations to sin, and which are in themselves sinful: before he discourses of temptations in which God was concerned, but here of temptations which he removes from him, and denies of him, as being unworthy of him: wherefore when any man is tempted to sin, whether when under adversity, or in prosperity, let him not say,

I am tempted of God] For God is holy, and without iniquity; nor does he delight in sin, but hates and abhors it; nor can he commit it, it being contrary to his nature, and the perfections of it; whereas no one can tempt another to sin, unless he is sinful himself, and delights in sin, and in those that commit it, nor without committing it himself; and yet sinful men are apt to charge God with their sins, and the temptations to them, in imitation of their first parent, Adam, when fallen, *Gen. iii. 12.* who, to excuse himself, lays the blame upon the woman, and ultimately upon God, who gave her to him; and suggests, that if it had not been for the woman, he should not have eat of the forbidden fruit, nor should he have had any temptation to it, had not God given him the woman to be with him; and therefore it was his fault: and in this sad manner do his sons and daughters reason, who, when through a notion they murmur against God, distrust his providence, or forsake his ways, say, If he had not laid his hand upon them, or suffered such afflictions to befall them, they had not been guilty of such sins; he himself is the occasion of them: but let no man talk at this wicked rate,

For God cannot be tempted with evil] Or evils. He was tempted by the Israelites at Massah and Meribah, from which those places had their names, who by their murmuring, distrust and un-

belief, proved and tried his patience and his power; and so he may be, and has been tempted by others in a like way; he may be tempted by evil men, and with evil things, but he cannot be tempted "to evil," as the Ethiopic version renders it; he is proof against all such temptations; he cannot be tempted by any thing in himself, who is pure and holy, or by any creature, or thing without him, to do any sinful action.

Neither tempteth he any man] That is, to sin; he tempted Abraham, to try his faith, love, and obedience to him; he tempted the Israelites in the wilderness, to try them and humble them, and prove what was in their hearts; and he tempted Job, and tried his faith and patience; and so he tempts and tries all his righteous ones, by afflictions, more or less; but he never tempts or solicits them to sin; temptations to sin come from another quarter, as follows.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

But every man is tempted] To sin, and he falls in with the temptation, and by it,

When he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed] The metaphor is taken either from fishes, who are enticed by the bait, and drawn out by the hook; or from a lascivious woman, who meeting with a young man, entices him, and draws him away after her to commit iniquity with her: by *lust* is meant, the principle of corrupt nature, which has its residence in the heart of man; is natural and hereditary to him, and therefore is called his own; he is conceived and shapen in it; he brings it into the world with him, and it continues in him, and is called his own heart's lust, *Rom. i. 24.* Now this meeting with some bait, which entices and draws it out, or with some external object, which promises pleasure or profit, a man is allured, and ensnared, and drawn away by it, and so the temptation begins: thus, for instance, covetousness was the predominant lust in Judas; this meeting with an external object, or objects, which promised him profit, he is at once enticed and drawn away to betray his Lord and Master for the sake of it: so sin often promises pleasure, though it is but an imaginary, and a short-lived one; which takes with a man's own lust and corruption within him, and so he is allured and drawn aside; and to this, and not to God, should he attribute temptation to sin.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Then when lust hath conceived] A proposal of pleasure

pleasure or profit being made, agreeable to *lust*, the principle of corrupt nature, sinful man is pleased with it; and instead of resisting and rejecting the motion made, he admits of it, and receives it, and cherishes it in his mind; he dallies and plays with it; he dwells upon it in his thoughts, and hides it under his tongue, and in his heart, as a sweet morsel, and forsakes it not; but contrives ways and means how to bring it about; and this is *lust's* conceiving. The figure is used in *Psalms* vii. 14. on which Kimchi, a Jewish commentator, has this note; "He (the psalmist) compares the thoughts of the heart, לחיך "to a conception," and when they go out in word, "this is *travail*, and in work or act, this is *bringing forth*." And so it follows here,

It bringeth forth sin] Into act, not only by consenting to it, but by performing it.

And sin, when it is finished] Being solicited, is agreed to, and actually committed.

Bringeth forth death] As the first sin of man brought death into the world, brought a spiritual death, or moral death upon man, subjected him to a corporal death, and made him liable to an eternal one; so every sin is deserving of death, death is the just wages of it; yea, even the motions of sin work in men to bring forth fruit unto death. Something like these several gradual steps, in which sin proceeds, is observed by the Jews, and expressed in much the like language, in allegorising the case of Lot, and his two daughters (i): "the concupiscent soul (or *lust*) stirs up the evil figment, and imagines by it, and it cleaves to every evil imagination, שמחמורה "until it conceives" a little, and produces in the heart of man the evil thought, and cleaves to it; and as yet it is in his heart, and is not finished to do it, until this desire or lust stirs up the strength of the body, first to cleave to the evil figment, and then, חסלות הרעה "sin is finished, as it is said, *Gen.* xix. 36."

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

For to make God the author of sin, or to charge him with being concerned in temptation to sin, is a very great error, a fundamental one, which strikes at the nature, and being of God, and at the perfection of his holiness: it is a denying of him, and is one of those damnable errors and heresies which bring upon men swift destruction; and therefore to be guarded against, rejected, and abhorred by all that profess any regard unto him, his name and glory.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Every good gift and every perfect gift] Whether of nature, providence, or grace, and especially the latter; spiritual gifts given along with Christ, or spiritual blessings in him; every such gift is, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, "the best gift;" better than those which only relate to the present life: and is *perfect*; such as the gifts of righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, regeneration, and eternal life. The Jews say (k), that the good things of this world are not truly good, in comparison of the good things of the world to come, and are not, טוב גמור "a perfect good." And every such an one

Is from above] Is not from a man's self, from the creature, or from below, but from heaven, and from God who dwells there.

And cometh down from the Father of lights] Or author of lights; of all corporal light, as the sun, moon, and stars; of all natural, rational, and moral light, in angels and men; of all spiritual light, or the light of grace in regenerate persons; and of eternal light, the light of glory in the spirits of just men made perfect.

With whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning] As there is in that great luminary, the sun in the firmament, which has its parallaxes, eclipses, and turnings, and casts its shadow; it rises and sets, appears and disappears every day; and it comes out of one tropic, and enters into another at certain seasons of the year: but with God, who is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, there is no change, nor any thing like it; he is unchangeable in his nature, perfections, purposes, promises, and gifts; wherefore he being holy, cannot turn to that which is evil; nor can he, who is the fountain of light, be the cause of darkness, or admit of any in him; and since every good and perfect gift comes from him, evil cannot proceed from him, nor can he tempt any to it.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

Of his own will begat he us] The apostle instances in one of those good and perfect gifts, regeneration; and he pitches upon a very proper and pertinent one, since this is the first gift of
Z grace

(i) Midrash Haneclam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 4. Vol. V.

(k) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 2, 3.

grace God bestows upon his people openly, and in their own persons; and is what involves other gifts, and prepares and makes meet for the gift of eternal life; and therefore may well be reckoned a *good* one: and it is also a *perfect* one; it is done at once; there are no degrees in it, as in sanctification; a man is born again at once, and is born a perfect new man in all his parts; no one is more regenerated than another, or the same person more regenerated at one time than at another: and this comes from above; it is called, a being *born from above*, in *John* iii. 3. as the words there may be rendered; and it comes from God the Father, even the Father of our Lord Jesus, as well as of all lights, *1 Peter* i. 3. and who in it produces light in darkness, and whose gifts of grace bestowed along with it are without repentance. And since this comes from him, he cannot be the author of evil, or tempt unto it. This is a settled and certain point, that all the good that is in men, and is done by them, comes from God; and all the evil that is in them, and done by them, is of themselves. This act of begetting, here ascribed to God, is what is elsewhere called a begetting again, that is, regeneration; it is an implantation of new principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in men; a quickening of them when dead in trespasses and sins; a forming of Christ in their Souls, and a making them partakers of the divine nature; and this is God's act, and not man's. Earthly parents cannot beget in this sense; nor ministers of the word, not causally, but only instrumentally, as they are instruments and means, which God makes use of; neither the ministry of the word, nor the ordinance of baptism, can of themselves regenerate any; nor can a man beget himself, as not in nature, so not in grace: the nature of the thing shews it, and the impotent case of men proves it: this is God's act, and his only; see *John* i. 13. and the impulsive or moving cause of it is, *his own will*. God does not regenerate, or beget men by necessity of nature, but of his own free choice; Christ, the Son of God, is begotten of him by necessity of nature, and not as the effect of his will; he is the brightness of his glory necessarily, as the beams and rays of light are necessarily emitted by the sun; but so it is not in regeneration: nor does God regenerate men through any consideration of their will, works, and merits; nor have these any influence at all upon it; but he begets men of his own free grace and favour, and of his rich and abundant mercy, and of his sovereign will and pleasure, according to his counsels and purposes of old. And the means he makes use of, or with which he does it, is

With the word of truth b] Not Christ, who is

the Word, and Truth itself; though regeneration is sometimes ascribed to him; and this act of begetting, is done by the Father, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead; but the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and by this souls are begotten and born again; see *Eph.* i. 13. *1 Peter* i. 23. and hence ministers of it are accounted spiritual fathers. Faith, and every other grace in regeneration, and even the Spirit himself, the regenerator, come this way: and the end is,

That we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures] Either of his new creatures, and so it has respect to such, as James, and others; who received the first-fruits of the Spirit, who first hoped and trusted in Christ, and were openly in him, and converted to him before others; or of his creatures, of mankind in general, who, with the Jews, are usually called *creatures*; see the note on *Mark* xvi. 15. and designs those who are redeemed from among men, and are the *first-fruits* to God and to the Lamb, as their regeneration makes appear: and this shews that such as are begotten again, or regenerated, are separated and distinguished from others, as the first-fruits be; and that they are preferred unto, and are more excellent than the rest of mankind, being made so by the grace of God; and that they are by regenerating grace devoted to the service of God, and are formed for his praise and glory.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren] Since the Gospel, the word of truth, is the means and instrument which God makes use of in regeneration, and in forming people for himself,

Let every man be swift to hear] Not any thing; not idle and unprofitable talk, or filthy and corrupt communications; but wholesome advice, good instructions, and the gracious experiences of the saints, and above all, the word of God; to the hearing of which men should fly as doves to their windows; should make haste, and be early in their attendance on it, as well as constant; and receive it with all readiness, and with a sort of greediness of mind, that their souls may be profited, and God may be glorified: the phrase is Jewish; things easy and smooth, a man is *סוּחַ לְשׁוֹמְרֵי* "swift to hear them (1)."

Slow to speak] Against what is heard, without thoroughly weighing and considering what is said; and

(1) Gloss. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1.

and this may regard silence under hearing the word; and is also a rule to be observed in private conversation: or the sense may be, be content to be hearers of the word, and not forward to be preachers of it; and if called to that work, think before you speak, meditate on the word, and study to be approved to God and men. Silence is not only highly commended by the Pythagoreans, among whom it was enjoined their disciples five years (*m*); but also by the Jews: they say, "Nothing is better for the body, than silence; that if a word is worth one shekel, silence is worth two, or worth a precious stone; that it is the spice of speech, and the chief of all spices; that it is the hedge of wisdom." Hence it is the advice of Shammai; "Say little, and do much (*n*). And they cry up, as a very excellent precept, "Be silent, and hear;" and, as containing more than persons are aware of (*o*).

Slow to wrath] In hearing; when admonitions and reproofs are given, sin is exposed, and vice corrected, and the distinguishing doctrines of grace are preached; which are apt to fill natural men with wrath, and which must greatly hinder the usefulness of the word; see *Luke* iv. 28. This is omitted in the Ethiopic version.

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

This is so far from engaging persons to do that which is right and acceptable, in the sight of God, that it puts them upon doing that which is evil. The Alexandrian copy reads, "with the wrath of men do not work the righteousness of God;" do not attend upon the word and ordinances of God with a wrathful spirit. Compare with this, *1 Tim.* ii. 8.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness] All manner of filthiness, both of flesh and spirit; all pride, vanity, wrath, malice, and evil-speaking, under hearing the word: the allusion seems to be to a boiling pot, which casts up scum and filth, which must be taken off: and such is the spirit of wrathful men; it throws up the filth of haughtiness and pride, of anger, wrath, and wickedness; which must be taken off, and laid aside; or the word will not be heard to any profit or advantage.

And superfluity of naughtiness] Or malice; the abundance and overflow of it, which arises from such an evil heart, where wrath prevails and governs: see *1 Peter* ii. 1. There seems to be an allusion to the removing of the superfluous foreskin of the flesh, in circumcision, typical of the *foreskin of the heart*, spoken of in *Jer.* iv. 4. which the Targum in that place, calls, רשע לבבון "the wickedness, or naughtiness of your hearts" to be removed.

And receive with meekness the engrafted word] Which becomes so when it is received; when it is put into the heart by the Spirit of God, and is mixed with faith by them that hear it; so that it is, as it were, incorporated into them, and becomes natural to them, which before was not; and taking deep root in them brings forth much fruit: and where it comes with power it reduces every high thought into the obedience of Christ, and makes men meek and humble; and only such receive the truth in the love of it; and to such is the Gospel preached, *Isa.* lxi. 1. and none but such hear it with profit and edification.

Which is able to save your souls] Even your whole persons, both soul and body: but the soul is only mentioned, as being the more excellent part of man: this must not be understood of the word, as if it was the author or cause of salvation, but as an instrument; it being a declaration of salvation by Christ, or what shews unto men the way of salvation by him; and is the power of God unto salvation to them, when it is attended with the energy of the Spirit, and the efficacy of divine grace. See *2 Tim.* iii. 15.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

But be ye doers of the word] And they are such who spiritually understand it, gladly receive it, and from the heart obey it, and make a sincere and ingenuous profession of it; and who submit to the ordinances it directs to, and keep them as they have been delivered; and live and walk becoming their profession of it. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "be ye doers of the law;" and so one of Stephens's copies, as in *Romans* ii. 13.

And not hearers only] Though the word should be heard swiftly and readily, and received with meekness; yet it should not be barely heard and assented to; but what is heard should be put in practice; and especially men should not depend upon their hearing, as if that would save them: this is

Deceiving your own selves] Such as rest upon the outward hearing of the word, will be sadly deceived,

(*m*) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25. (*n*) Pirke Abot, c. 2. §. 15, 17. and 3. 13. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1. Vajikra Rabba, §. 16. fol. 158. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 71. 1. (*o*) Philo Zuia Res. Divin. Hæres, p. 48a. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 7. 1.

deceived, and will find themselves miserably mistaken another day; see *Luke* xiii. 25, 26. Arguments taken from hence, are like the sophisms, paralogisms, and false reasonings of sophisters, which carry a fair shew, and ensnare and deceive.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For if any be a bearer of the word, and not a doer] The Arabic version here again reads, "a hearer of the law," and so some copies; not hearing, but practice, is the main thing; not theory, but action: hence, says R. Simeon, not the word, or the searching into it, and the explanation of it, is the root, or principal thing, *מדות ופועל* "but the work (*o*):" and if a man is only a preacher, or a hearer, and not a doer,

He is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass] Or, "the face of his generation;" the face with which he was born; his true, genuine, native face; in distinction from any counterfeit one, or from the face of his mind: it means his own corporal face. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the lineaments of his face."

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way] He takes a slight glance of himself, and departs.

And straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was] He forgets either his spots, blemishes, and imperfections, or his comeliness and beauty; the features of his face, be they comely or not: so, a bare hearer of the word, who is not concerned to practise what he hears, whilst he is hearing he observes some things amiss in himself, and some excellencies in Christ; but, when the discourse is over, he goes his way, and thinks no more of either.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty] By which is meant, not the moral Law, but the Gospel, for only of that is the apostle speaking in the context: this is no other, than the word of truth, with which God begets men of his own

will; and is the engrafted word, which is able to save, and of which men should be doers, as well as hearers, *Gal.* 18, 21, 22. and, this is compared to a glass by the apostle Paul, *2 Cor.* iii. 18. and the word here used for *looking* into it, is the same word the apostle Peter uses of the angels, who desired to *look* into the mysteries of the Gospel, *1 Peter* i. 12. all which serve to strengthen this sense: now the Gospel is called a *law*; not that it is a law, strictly speaking, consisting of precepts, and established, and enforced by sanctions and penalties; for it is a declaration of righteousness and salvation by Christ; a publication of peace and pardon by him; and a free promise of eternal life, through him; but as it is an instruction or doctrine: the law with the Jews, is called *תורה* because it is "teaching and instructive;" and every thing that is so, is by them called by this name: hence we find the doctrine of the Messiah, which is no other than the Gospel, is in the Old Testament called the *law* of the Lord, and his *law*, *Isa.* ii. 2. and chap. xlii. 4. and in the New Testament it is called the *law*, or doctrine of faith, *Rom.* iii. 27. and this doctrine is *perfect*, as in *Psal.* xix. 7. it being a perfect plan of truths, containing in it all truth as it is in Jesus, even all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and because it is a revelation of things perfect; of the perfect righteousness of Christ, and of perfect justification by it, and of free and full pardon of sins through him, and of compleat salvation by him; and because it directs to Christ, in whom perfection is: and it is a law or doctrine of liberty; *τὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, "that which is of liberty;" which has liberty for its subject, which treats of it, even of the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free: the Gospel proclaims this liberty to captive souls; and is the word of truth, which makes them free, or is the means of freeing them from the slavery of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and from the bondage of the law; and is what gives souls freedom and boldness at the throne of grace; and is that which leads them into the liberty of grace here, and gives them a view and hope of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter. This doctrine is as a glass to look into; in which is beheld the glory of Christ's person, and office, and grace; and though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet a man never so fully and clearly discovers the sin that dwells in him, and the swarms of corruptions which are in his heart, as when the light of the glorious Gospel shines into him, and when in it he beholds the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ; see *Isa.* vi. 5. and looking into this glass, or into this doctrine, is by faith, and with the eyes of the understanding, opened and enlightened by the Spirit

Spirit of God; and the word here used, signifies a looking wistly and intently, with great care and thought, and not in a slight and superficial manner; and such a looking is designed, as is attended with effect; such an one as transforms into the same image that is beheld, from glory to glory; and happy is the man that so looks into it.

And continueth therein] Is not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, nor carried about with divers and strange doctrines; but is established in the faith, stands fast in it, and abides by it; or continues looking into this glass, and to Christ, the author and finisher of faith, who is beheld in it; and keeps his eye upon it, and the object held forth in it; and constantly attends the ministration of it.

He being not a forgetful hearer] But takes heed to the things he hears and sees, lest he should let them slip; and, being conscious of the weakness of his memory, implores the divine Spirit to be his remembrancer, and bring to his mind, with fresh power and light, what he has heard.

But a doer of the work] Of the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, and of every work and ordinance the Gospel ministry points unto; doing, and being subject to all in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ.

This man shall be blessed in his deed] Or doing; and whilst he is doing; not that he is blessed, for what he does, but in what he does; see *Psalms* xix. 11. he having, in hearing the word, and looking into it, and in submitting to every ordinance of the Gospel, the presence of God, the discoveries of his love, communion with Christ, and communication of grace from him by the Spirit; so that wisdom's ways becomes ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; see *Psalms* lxxv. 4. and lxxxiv. 4, 5. Moreover, in all such a man does, he is prosperous and successful; in all he does, he prospers: and so he is blessed in his deed by God, whose blessing makes rich, both in spirituals and temporals: there seems to be an allusion to the blessed man in *Psalms* i. 1, 3.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

If any man among you seem to be religious] By his preaching, or praying, and hearing, and other external duties of religion, he is constant in the observance of; and who, upon the account of these things, "thinks himself to be a religious

"man," as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; or is thought to be so by others.

And brideth not his tongue] But boasts of his works, and speaks ill of his brethren; backbites them, and hurts their names and characters, by private insinuations, and public charges, without any foundation; who takes no care of what he says, but gives his tongue a liberty of speaking any thing, to the injury of others, and the dishonour of God and his ways: there seems to be an allusion to *Psalms* xxxix. 1.

But deceiveth his own heart] With his shew of religion, and external performances; on which he builds his hopes of salvation; of which he is confident; and so gives himself to a loose way of talking what he pleases.

This man's religion is vain] Useless and unprofitable to himself and others; all his preaching, praying, hearing, and attendance on the ordinances, will be of no avail to him; and he, notwithstanding these, by his evil tongue, brings a scandal and reproach upon the ways of God and doctrines of Christ.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Pure religion and undefiled] That which is sincere and genuine, and free from adulteration and hypocrisy.

Before God and the Father is this] Or in the sight of God, the Father of Christ; and all his people; that which is approved of by him, who is the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of men: not that the apostle is giving a full definition of true religion; only he mentions some of the effects of it, by which it is known, and without which it cannot be true and genuine; and they are these:

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction] And not only to see them, and speak a word of comfort to them, but to communicate to them, and supply their wants, as they may require, and according to the ability God has given: where there is true religion in the heart, there is love to God; and where there is love to God, there is love to the saints; and this will shew itself to them, in times of affliction and distress; and where this is wanting, religion itself is not pure and undefiled.

And to keep himself unspotted from the world] From the men of the world, who defile by their evil

evil communications; and "from the vices of the world," as the Arabic version renders it, which are of a defiling nature; and, where religion is in its power and purity, and the Gospel of the grace of God comes with efficacy; it teaches to separate from the rest of the world, and to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

CHAPTER II.

In this chapter the apostle dissuades from a respect of persons on account of outward circumstances; shews that the law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy is to be exercised, as well as justice done; and exposes the folly of such who boast of faith without works: he dissuades the saints from all partiality to the rich and poor, from their relation to one another, as brethren, and from their common faith, of which Christ, the Lord of glory, is the object, *ch. 1.* and supposes an instance of it, either in a court of judicature, or a religious assembly, *ch. 2, 3.* and then makes an appeal unto them, and expostulates with them about it, *ch. 4.* and makes use of an argument against it taken from the divine conduct; and an instance of his grace in the choice of persons to eternal life, *ch. 5.* a conduct very different from some persons here blamed, *ch. 6.* and other arguments follow, dissuading from a respect of persons, taken from the characters of rich men, as oppressors of the poor, litigious and quarrelsome with their neighbours, and blasphemers of the name of God, *ch. 7.* and from the law of God, which requires the love of the neighbour, and which to fulfil is to do well, *ch. 8.* and from the breach of it, by having respect to persons, whereby its penalty is incurred, *ch. 9.* for which a reason is given; because whoever offends in one point of the law, is guilty of the whole, *ch. 10.* as is a clear case, since the same lawgiver that forbids one sin, forbids another; so that he that is guilty of either of them is a transgressor of the law, *ch. 11.* wherefore it is right both to speak and act according to it, since men will be judged by it, *ch. 12.* and he will have no mercy shewn him that has shewn none to the poor, but merciful ones will escape damnation, *ch. 13.* and then the apostle argues from the unprofitableness of faith itself without works, *ch. 14.* and which he exemplifies in the case of a poor brother or sister who are wished well, but nothing given them; which good words, without deeds, are of no profit, *ch. 15, 16.* so in like manner, faith without works is a dead faith, *ch. 17.* nor indeed can it be made out

that a man has faith, if he has not works, *ch. 18.* at least such a faith as has justification and salvation connected with it; his faith, at most, is no better than that of the devils who are damned, *ch. 19.* and that such a faith is a dead faith, *ch. 20.* and that true faith is attended with, and evidenced by works, the apostle proves by two instances; the one is that of Abraham, whose faith appeared to be genuine, and he to be a justified person, by the works he did; particularly by offering up his son Isaac; in which way his faith operated, and shewed itself to be sincere and hearty; and the scripture was fulfilled, that Abraham was a believer, and had righteousness imputed to him, and was a friend of God, and a justified person, *ch. 21—24.* and the other instance is that of Rahab, whose faith was also shewn by her works, and so a justified person, by receiving the spies with peace, and dismissing them with safety, *ch. 25.* and then the apostle explains what he means, by saying more than once, that *faith without works is dead*; which he illustrates by the simile of a man's body being dead, without the spirit or soul in it, *ch. 26.*

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of glory,* with respect of persons.

My brethren] As the apostle is about to dissuade from the evil of having respect to persons; this is a very fit introduction to it, and carries in it an argument why it should not obtain; since the saints are all *brethren*, they are children of the same Father, belong to the same family, and are all one in Christ Jesus, whether high or low, rich or poor.

Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons] That is, such as have, and hold, and profess the faith of Christ ought not along with it to use respect of persons, or to make such a distinction among the saints, as to prefer the rich to the contempt of the poor; and in this exhortation many things are contained, which are so many arguments why such a practice should not be encouraged; for faith, whether as a doctrine, or as a grace, is a like precious and common to all; and is the faith of Christ, which, as a doctrine, is delivered by him to all the saints, and as a grace, he is both the author and object of it; and is the faith of their common Lord and Saviour, and who is the Lord of glory, or the glorious Lord; and the poor, as well as the rich, are espoused by him, as their Lord and Husband; and are redeemed by him, and are equally under his government and protection,

protection, and members of his body: the Syriac version reads, "have not the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus, &c." meaning either the glory which Christ is possessed of, whether as the Son of God, in the perfections of his nature, or as man and mediator, being now crowned with glory and honour, and which is seen and known by faith; or else that glory which Christ has in his hands, to bestow upon his people, and to which they are called, and will appear in, when he shall appear, and about which their faith is now employed: and since this glory equally belongs to them all, no difference should be made on account of outward circumstances, so as to treat any believer with neglect and contempt.

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

For if there come unto your assembly] The place of religious worship, where saints are assembled together for that purpose; though some think a civil court of judicature is intended, and to which the context seems to incline; see *2. 6.*

A man with a gold ring] On his finger, which shews him to be a man of dignity and wealth; so those of the senatorian and equestrian orders, among the Romans, were distinguished from the common people by wearing gold rings; though in time the use of them became promiscuous (*g*): the ancients used to wear but one (*r*), as here but one is mentioned; and only freemen, not servants, might wear it: however, by this circumstance, the apostle describes a rich man; adding,

In goodly apparel] Gay clothing, bright, shining garments, glistering with gold and silver, very rich and costly, as well as whole, neat, and clean:

And there come in also a poor man in vile raiment] Mean and despicable, filthy and ragged: in the courts of judicature with the Jews, two men who were at law with one another, might not have different apparel on whilst they were in court, and their cause was trying: their law runs thus (*r*): "Two adversaries, (at law with each other) if one of them is clothed with precious garments, (*בגדים יקרים*) "goodly apparel," and the other is clothed with *בגדים בוזים* "vile raiment," (the judge) says to the honourable person, Either clothe him as thou art, whilst thou contendest with him, or be clothed as he is, that ye may be alike," or on an equal foot.

3 And ye have respect to him that wear-eth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

And ye have respect to him that wear-eth the gay clothing] Take notice of him, and shew favour to him, to the neglect and contempt of the other. This is an instance of respect of persons condemned and dissuaded from:

And say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place] The best place; whether it be in a religious assembly, or in a civil court of judicature.

And say to the poor, Stand thou there] Or in a lower and meaner place.

Or sit thou here under my footstool] This also was contrary to the Jewish canons (*t*), that one should sit, and another stand, whilst their cause was trying; the law runs thus: "One shall not sit, and another stand, but both shall stand; but if the Sanhedrim, or court, please to let them sit, they sit; but one does not sit above, and the other below; but one by the side of the other."

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Are ye not then partial in yourselves] That is, guilty of such partiality as must appear to yourselves, and your own consciences must accuse you of; or do not ye distinguish, or make a difference among yourselves by such a conduct towards the rich and the poor.

And are become judges of evil thoughts?] Or, "are distinguishers by evil thoughts;" that is, make a distinction between the rich and the poor, by an evil way of thinking; that one is better than the other, and to be preferred before him.

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Hearken, my beloved brethren] As to a matter of importance, and worthy of attention and regard; being an instance of the divine conduct towards the poor, and carries in it a strong argument against respect of persons.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world] This interrogative is equal to a strong affirmative; and the

(g) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29.

(r) Isidor. Hispal. Originum, l. 19. c. 32. p. 172.

(t) Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedr m, c. 21. §. 2.

(r) Maimon. Ibid. §. 3. vid. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 30. 1.

the sense is, that God has chosen the poor of this world; and which is to be understood, not of the choice of them to an office, either in church or state; though sometimes this has been the case, as the instances of David, and the apostles of Christ, shew; nor merely to the Gospel, and the outward means of grace, though the poor have the Gospel preached unto them; nor of effectual vocation, though this is true; but of eternal election, which is the act of God the Father, and passed before the foundation of the world; and is an act of sovereign grace, and is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works; and is the source of all grace, and remains immutable and irrevocable; now the objects of this are, *the poor of this world*; that is, who are poor with respect to the things of this world, but not with respect to the things of another world; for they are chosen to be heirs of a kingdom, and shall enjoy it; though these are not all chosen by God, nor are they the only persons that are chosen; there are some poor men that are not chosen, and are miserable here and hereafter; and there are some rich men that are chosen; but for the most part, or generally speaking, they are not many mighty, nor noble, but the poorer sort, which God has made choice of to partake both of grace and glory. It may be, the apostle has some peculiar respect to the poor among the Gentiles, whom God had chosen; it was usual with the Jews to call the Gentiles *the world*, and they were Jews the apostle now writes to, and who were scattered abroad among the Gentiles; and therefore he might very aptly call them, *this world*, among whom they lived; and suggest to them, that God had chosen some of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, and even some of the poorer sort of them; and it was usual with the Jews to distinguish between עני ישראל "the poor of Israel," and עני עולם "the poor of the world," or עני אומות העולם "the poor of the nations of the world (u):" the Alexandrian copy, and some others, leave out the word *this*, and so the Syriac and Arabic versions, which makes the phrase more agreeable to the Jewish way of speaking. The Gentiles in common were despicable with the Jews, and especially the poor of them; and yet God chose these.

Rich in faith] Not that they were so, or were considered as such, when chosen, and so were chosen because of their faith; for then also they were, or were considered as heirs of the kingdom, which would be monstrously absurd; and yet there is as much reason, from the text, for the one as for the other; but the sense is, that they

were chosen "to be rich in faith;" and so the Syriac version supplies in the next clause, "that they might be heirs;" which if it had been placed before this clause also, would have been right; election to grace is signified in the one, and election to glory in the other: men are chosen, not because they do believe, or shall believe, but that they might believe; and which faith they have in consequence of election; and which when they have, they are *rich*: faith is a rich precious grace itself; it is a part of the riches of grace, and is more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and it is the means of receiving and enjoying much riches, as Christ the pearl of great price himself, and all spiritual blessings along with him; such as the rich robe of his righteousness, full pardon of sin, which is according to the riches of his grace, and adoption, which makes men heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and even the eternal inheritance itself, both the promise of it, and a right unto it; all which are said to be received by faith; and therefore believers, how poor soever they may be, as to this world's goods, are truly rich men.

And heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?] Of glory, which is prepared for all the chosen ones, from the foundation of the world; and is freely given to them by their Father, and to which they are called in effectual vocation; and hence they are made kings and priests unto God, and have crowns and thrones provided for them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "heirs of the promise which he hath promised to them that love him;" that is, which God has promised them, as the vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read; not that their love to God is the cause of this kingdom, or of their choice to it, or of the promise of it to them; all which flow from the love of God to them; but this is descriptive of the persons who shall enjoy it, and may expect to enjoy it, as in chapter i. 12.

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

But ye have despised the poor] Or dishonoured, and reproached them, by shewing respect of persons, in preferring the rich to them, and in distinguishing them in such a manner as was to their contempt and injury; which is a reproaching not only of them, but their maker; and is in effect saying, that God has done either a weak or a wrong thing, in choosing them to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, it being directly contrary to his conduct.

(u) T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 30. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 20. 2.

Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Which may be understood either of rich men that were unbelievers; and these either the heathen magistrates, who ruled over them in a tyrannical way, and with rigour, and often summoned them before them, and persecuted them with violence; or their own countrymen, the Jews, who stirred up the chief men of the Gentiles against them, and drew them to their judgment-seats, as they drew Paul to the judgment-seat of Gallio, *Acts* xiii. 50. and chapter xviii. 12. or else of rich professors of religion, who assumed a despotic power over the poor brethren of the church, and loved to have the pre-eminence over them, as Diotrophes did, and set up tribunals in the churches, and tried and condemned them in an arbitrary way; or else upon civil accounts had them before heathen magistrates, and went to law with them in their courts, before unbelievers, which is a practice condemned in *1 Cor.* vi. 1. and seeing now rich men used them so ill, the apostle mentions this as an argument to dissuade them from respect of persons; seeing they had but little reason to shew so much regard unto them, who had treated them in so evil a manner: this is not to be understood of all rich men; nor is the apostle's design to destroy that natural and civil order there is among men, by reason of their different stations, offices, and circumstances; it being highly proper that honour should be given to whom honour is due, but not to the dishonour of another.

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

Of Christ, or christians; and which they, as before, may design either unbelieving rich men, whether among Jews, or Gentiles, who blasphemed and cursed the name of Christ, and compelled others to do so likewise; or such who professed the christian religion, who by their supercilious and disdainful treatment of their poor brethren, and by their dragging of them to the tribunals of the heathens, and distressing them with vexatious lawsuits there, caused the name of Christ, after which they were called *christians*, to be blasphemed and evil spoken of among the Gentiles.

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

If ye fulfil the royal law] Which is the law of love to men, without distinction of rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; and is called royal, because it is the law of the King of kings; hence

the Syriac version renders it, "the law of God;" it is the law of Christ, who is King of saints; and because it is a principal law, the chief of laws; as love to God is the sum of the first and great commandment in the law, and may be called the king of laws; so love to the neighbour, is the second, and next unto it, and may very well bear the name of the queen of laws, and so has *royalty* in it; and indeed this last is said to be the fulfilling of the law, *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9, 10. *Gal.* v. 14. and it is also submitted to, and obeyed by such who are made kings and priests to God; and that in a royal manner, with a princely spirit, willingly, and with all readiness: the same word in the Hebrew language נריב signifies, *prince*, and, to be *willing*. The Jews frequently ascribe royalty to the law, and often speak of כתר תורה "the crown of the law (*w*);" and they suppose the Israelites had crowns upon their heads when the law was given them on mount Sinai, in which were engraven the name of God, and which they were stripped of when they made the golden calf (*x*); now this *royal law* is fulfilled, when it is regarded without respect of persons,

According to the scripture] In *Lev.* xix. 18.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself] And which is to be understood of every nation, without distinction of Jews and Gentiles; and of persons of every state and condition, rich and poor, without any difference: and when this law is so observed it is commendable.

Ye do well] That which is right, and which is a man's duty to do; this when done from right principles, and to a right end, is a good work, and is doing a good work well.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin] This is not doing well, but is a transgression of the law, as every sin is; hence it follows,

And are convinced of the law as transgressors] Which carries on a formal process against such persons; it accuses them of sin, and charges them with it; it proves it upon them, and convicts them of it; it pronounces them guilty, and curses them for it; and passes the sentence of condemnation and death upon them: wherefore care should be taken not to commit this sin, and so fall under the convictions and reproofs of the law.

10 For

(w) Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 13. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 4. fol. 183. 2. & §. 14. fol. 215. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 73. 4. Targum Jon. in Deut. xxxiv. 5. (x) Vid. Targum. Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxxii. 25. & xxxiii. 4.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law] Or the greatest part of it, excepting only in one point, as follows: Adam, in a state of innocence, was able to keep the whole law, but by sin he lost that power, nor can any of his posterity now keep it perfectly; they are all transgressors of it, and liable to its penalty; unregenerate men are unsubjected to it, and have an aversion to it, and despise it, and cast it behind their backs; regenerate persons, who love it, and delight in it, after the inner man, do not keep it perfectly; the several parts of the law may be indeed kept by a believer, and that sincerely, but not to a perfect degree, for in many things they all offend; Christ only has perfectly kept it, and is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness; men of a pharisaical disposition may fancy they have kept it wholly, as the young man in the Gospel, and Saul, before his conversion; but this is but a fancy, and a sad mistake: the case in the text is only a supposed one, and as it is here put, implies imperfection; for it follows,

And yet offend in one point] Sin, which is a transgression of the law, is an offence to God the Father, who is of purer eyes than to behold it; to Jesus Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and to the blessed Spirit, who is grieved and vexed by it; and to the justice of God, which being injured by it demands satisfaction; and to the law of God, which accuses, convicts, reproves, and condemns for it. The word used signifies to *fall*; and designs more than stumbling, even an open breach and violation of the law; and which being made, by any, in a single instance,

He is guilty of all] This seems to agree with some common sayings of the Jews, that he that is suspected in one thing, is suspected in the whole law (y); and he that keeps this or the other command, keeps the whole law; and he that breaks this or the other command, breaks the whole law; as whether it respects the sabbath, or adultery, or that command, Thou shalt not covet, or any other (z): and this must be understood, not of every particular command in the law, as if he that is guilty of murder, is in that instance also guilty of adultery; or he that is guilty of adultery, is in that instance guilty of murder; but the sense

is, that he is guilty of the breach of the whole law, though not of the whole of the law; as he that breaks any one condition of a covenant, which may consist of many, though he does not violate every condition, yet breaks the whole covenant; so he that transgresses in any one point of the law, breaks the whole, commits sin, and is deserving of death, and is treated by the law as a transgressor of it, let it be in what instance it will. But it does not follow from hence, that all sins are equal, as the Stoics say (a), for there are greater and lesser sins, *John* xix. 11. though not some venial, and others mortal, for the wages of every sin is death; nor that the punishment of sin will be alike, as all sins were punishable alike by Draco's laws, but not by the law of God, *Matt.* xi. 22, 24. but this may be fairly concluded from hence, that there can be no justification in the sight of God, by an imperfect obedience to the law, or by a partial righteousness: the law requires perfect obedience, and in failure of that, though but in one point, curses and condemns; and likewise it may be inferred from hence, that a man is not at liberty to obey and neglect what commandments of the law he pleases, but should have respect to them all; which seems greatly the design of the apostle, as appears by what follows.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

For he that said, Do not commit adultery] That same lawgiver, who is but one, and is God, that gave out the seventh command, and forbids adultery,

Said also, Do not kill] Delivered the sixth command, which forbids murder.

Now if thou commit no adultery] Does not break the seventh command;

Yet if thou kill] Break the sixth command,

Thou art become a transgressor of the law] Not of that particular precept of the law, the seventh command, for the contrary is supposed before, but of the sixth only; and yet by so doing, a man becomes a violator of the whole law; for the law is but one, though it consists of various precepts; and the breach of one precept, as well as of another, is the breach of the law: and besides, there is but one Lawgiver, who has enjoined one command as well as another, and whose legislative power and authority is despised and trampled upon by the violation of one command as of another. This

(y) T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 69. 1.

(z) BeMidbar Rabba, §. 9. fol. 19a. 3. Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 2. & in Lev. fol. 32. 3. Shemot Rabba, §. 25. fol. 109. 3. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 39. 2. & Menachot, fol. 42. 2. & Abkath Rochel, par. 1. p. 3.

(a) Zeno & Chrysippus apud Laert. vit. Zeno, p. 510.

This is the apostle's argument, and way of reasoning, proving the above assertion, that he who breaks the law in one particular instance, is guilty of the breach of the whole law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

So speak ye, and so do] Both words and actions should be taken care of; it becomes men to observe what they say, and what they do; for both sinful words and works are transgressions of the law, and will be brought to judgment; every idle word, as well as every evil work, both open and secret, men must give an account of in the day of judgment: wherefore it is incumbent on them, so to behave,

As they that shall be judged by the law of liberty] See the note on chapter i. 25. with which compare *Romans ii. 12, 16.* Heathens will be judged by the law of nature, Jews by the law of Moses, and those who live under the Gospel-dispensation, according to the Gospel of Christ.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

For he shall have judgment without mercy] Strict justice, and no mercy shown him:

That hath shewed no mercy] To the poor brethren, and distressed members of Christ, but has shewn respect of persons to the hurt of the poor, and has despised and oppressed them, instead of relieving and comforting them. So the rich man that neglected Lazarus at his gates, is refused a drop of water to cool his tongue; and the servant that cruelly insisted on his fellow-servant's paying him all he owed, justly incurred the displeasure of his lord, and was by him delivered to the tormentors; and that servant that bears his fellow-servants, will be cut asunder, and have his portion with hypocrites; and such who have seen any of the brethren of Christ hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison, and have shewed no regard for them, will hear, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*

And mercy rejoiceth against judgment] That is, merciful men, who have shewn mercy to the poor saints, will not be afraid of the awful judgment, but rather rejoice or glory, as the word signifies, in the view of it, since they will obtain mercy at that day, and hear, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, &c.* *Matt. xxv. 34—36.* so the Ethiopic version renders it, "he only shall glory in the day of judgment, who hath shewed mercy," the Alexandrian copy reads in the imperative, "let

"mercy glory, &c." and the Syriac version, "be ye exalted by mercy over judgment."

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

What doth it profit, my brethren] The apostle having finished his discourse on respect of persons, and the arguments he used to dissuade from it, by an easy transition, passes on to treat upon faith and works, shewing, that faith without works, particularly without works of mercy, is of no profit and advantage.

Though a man say he hath faith, and have not works] It is clear, that the apostle is not speaking of true faith, for that, in persons capable of performing them, is not without works; it is an operative grace; it works by love and kindness, both to Christ, and to his members; but of a profession of faith, a mere historical one, by which a man, at most, assents to the truth of things, as even devils do, *7. 19.* and only says he has faith, but has it not; as Simon Magus, who said he believed, but did not.

Can faith save him?] Such a faith as this, a faith without works, an historical one, a mere profession of faith, which lies only in words, and has no deeds to shew the truth and genuineness of it. True faith indeed has no causal influence on salvation, or has any virtue and efficacy in itself to save; Christ, the object of faith, is the only cause and author of salvation; faith is only that grace which receives a justifying righteousness, the pardon of sin, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; but it does not justify, nor pardon, nor adopt, nor give the right to the inheritance, but lays hold on, and claims these, by virtue of the gift of grace; and it has spiritual and eternal salvation inseparably connected with it; but as for the other faith, a man may have it, and be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; he may have all faith in that sense, and be nothing; it is no other than the devils themselves have; and so he may have it, and be damned.

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

If a brother or sister] A christian man or woman, a fellow-member of a church of Christ; for this relation is to be understood in a spiritual sense, though it does not exclude such who are in this relation in a natural sense.

Be naked] Or clothed in rags, or in very mean and sordid apparel, such as will neither keep them warm, nor clean and decent; for they must not

be supposed to be entirely naked, but to be in a very uncomfortable and indecent garb.

And destitute of daily food] Have not food sufficient for the day; or ought to support nature with, and yield them proper refreshment and nourishment.

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

And one of you say unto them] That is, one of the same faith, and in the same communion, and church-fellowship.

Depart in peace] Wishing them all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward.

Be ye warmed and filled] Clothed and fed; signifying, that they wished them all the accommodations of life.

Notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body] Neither clothes to wear, nor food to eat; nothing to warm their bodies, or fill their bellies.

What doth it profit] The Ethiopic version reads, "what doth it profit them?" either the poor brother, or sister, to whom these good words are given, and nothing else; for these will neither warm them, nor fill them; or the persons themselves, that say these things to them: and the apostle, by this instance, shews, that as that charity which lies only in words and in tongue, and not in deed and in truth, is unprofitable, and good for nothing, even to them that profess it; so that faith, which a man says he has, and yet is without works, is alike unprofitable unto him.

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

It is like a lifeless carcass, a body without a soul, *1. 26.* for as works, without faith, are dead works, so faith, without works, is a dead faith, and not like the lively hope and faith of regenerated persons: and indeed, such who have no other faith than this, are dead in trespasses and sins; not that works are the life of faith, or that the life of faith lies in, and flows from works; but, as Dr Ames observeth (*b*), good works are second acts, necessarily flowing from the life of faith; to which may be added, and by these faith appears to be living, lively and active, or such who perform them appear to be true and living believers.

(b) *Medulla Theolog.* l. 2. c. 7. §. 35.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works] That is, a true believer in Christ may very justly call upon a vain boaster of his faith, who has no works, to give proof and evidence of it, and address him after this manner; You say, you have faith, be it so that you have; I have works, you see I have, I say nothing about my faith at present; now,

Shew me thy faith without thy works] If thou canst; see what ways, means, and methods thou canst make use of, to make it appear to me, or any other, that you have the faith you talk of: the words are a sort of sarcasm and jeer upon the man, and yet very just, calling upon him to do that which is impossible to be done, and thereby exposing his vain boast; for faith is an inward principle in the heart; an hidden thing, and cannot be seen and known but by external acts; and where it is right, it is operative, and shews itself by works, which is not practicable in those who have none.

And I will shew thee my faith by my works] There may be indeed an appearance of good works, where there is no faith, as in the heathens, in the scribes and Pharisees, and in the Papists, and others; and on the other hand, there may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not an opportunity of shewing it by a series of good works, or a course of godly living; as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in those who are converted in their last moments, as the thief upon the cross; wherefore works are not infallible proofs and evidences of faith, yet they are the best we are capable of giving of it to men, or they of receiving. In short, though works may deceive, and do not infallibly prove the truth of faith, yet it is certain, that where they are not, but persons live in a continued course of sinning, there cannot be true faith.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Thou believest that there is one God] These words are a continuation of the address of the man that has works, to him that boasts of his faith without them, observing to him, that one, and a main article of his faith is, that there is one God; which is to be understood in the christian sense, since both the person speaking, and the person spoken

spoken to, were such as professed themselves christians; so that to believe there is one God, is not merely to give into this article, in opposition to the polytheism of the Gentiles, or barely to confess the God of Israel, as believed on by the Jews; but to believe that there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and that these three are the one God; wherefore this article of faith includes every thing relating to God; as to God the Father, his being and perfections, so to Christ as God, and the Son of God, and the Messiah, &c. and to the holy Spirit; and to believe all this is right.

Thou doest well] For that there is but one God, is to be proved by the light of nature, and from the works of creation and providence, and has been owned by the wisest of the heathens themselves; and is established by divine revelation, in the books both of the Old and of the New Testament; what has been received by the Jews, and is well known by christians, to whom it is set in the clearest light, and who are assured of the truth of it: but then

The devils also believe] The Arabic version reads, "the devils likewise so believe;" they believe the same truth; they know and believe there is but one God, and not many; and they know that the God of Israel is he; and that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; they know and believe him to be the most high God, whose servants the ministers of the Gospel are; and they know and believe that Jesus is the holy One of God, the Son of God, and the Messiah, *Matt.* xvi. 17. and chap. xix. 15. *Luke* iv. 34, 41.

And tremble] At the wrath of God, which they now feel, and at the thought of future torments, which they expect, *Mark* v. 7. *Matt.* viii. 29. and which is more than some men do; and yet these shall not be saved, their damnation is certain and inevitable; *2 Peter* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. wherefore it follows that a bare historical faith will not profit, and cannot save any; a man may have all faith of this kind, and be damned; and therefore it is not to be boasted of, nor trusted to.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

But wilt thou know, O vain man] These are the words of the apostle resuming the argument, that *faith without works is dead*, useless, and unprofitable; and the man that boasts of his faith, and has no works to shew it, he calls a *vain man*, an empty one, sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal: empty vessels make the greatest sound; such are proud boasters, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind; but are empty of the true knowledge of God, and of the faith of Christ, and of the

grace of the Spirit: the Syriac version renders it, "O weak, or feeble man," as he must needs be, whose faith is dead, and boasts of such a lifeless thing; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "O foolish man," for such an one betrays his ignorance in spiritual things, whatever conceit he has of his knowledge and understanding: the character seems levelled against the Gnosticks, who were swelled with a vain opinion of their knowledge, to whom the apostle addresses himself thus. The phrase, *vain man*, is a proper interpretation of the word *רָקָא* *Raka*, or *Reka*, used in *Matt.* v. 22. see the note there; which though not to be said to a man in an angry way, yet may be applied to men of such a character as here described; who were empty of solid good, and yet boasted of their knowledge. *Wilt thou know?* dost thou require proofs?

That faith without works is dead] As in *1. 17.* and that true faith has alway works accompanying it, and is shewn and known thereby? Then take the following instances:

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works] Not as the causes of his justification, that is denied *Romans* iy. 2. but as effects of it, shewing the truth of his faith, and the reality of his justification: he had both faith and works, and the former were known by the latter; and even the faith which he had expressed years ago, was manifested, demonstrated, and confirmed to be true and genuine; by the instance of his obedience to God here produced; by which it appeared he was a true believer, a justified person, approved of God, and loved by him. Now if this was the case of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, yea the father of the faithful, of all that believe, he is, and must be a vain man, that talks of faith without works; and his faith must be a dead one, and he be very unlike the father of them that believe: the good work instanced in, is the offering up of Isaac;

When he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? For when he was bid to take his son, is only and beloved son, Isaac, and offer him up on one of the mountains, that should be shewn him, he made haste to do it; he provided every thing for it; he clave the wood, and carried it with him, and fire in his hand; he built an altar, laid the wood on it, bound his son, laid the wood on the altar, and his son on the wood, and stretched out his hand with his knife in it to slay him; so that it was all one with respect to his intention and will

will as if he had actually offered him, and was a full trial and proof of his obedience to God. This was not the only act of obedience, or good work, which he performed; but this being a very eminent one, the apostle instances in it, as a very considerable evidence of his faith in God, and love to him; and which shewed him to be a justified person, as he was long before he performed this action, even before Isaac was born; see *Gen. xv. 6.* and therefore it can never be the apostle's meaning, that he was justified before God by this, or any other good work or works, as cause or causes of it; but only that he was declared to be so; or, in other words, that his faith was attended with good works, and evidenced by them.

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

Seest thou how faith wrought with his works? Not to justify him before God; for neither faith nor works are ever said in scripture to justify any man; but his faith being of the right kind, a faith which works by love, it put him upon doing this work, and many others; for this was done in faith, *Heb. xi. 17—19.* as all good works are, which are properly such; and where there is true faith, it will influence and engage a man to do good works, as it did Abraham.

And by works was faith made perfect? Not with an absolute perfection; for though Abraham's faith was very great, yet there were things lacking in it, and he had his fits and times of unbelief; and had he lived till now, his faith, in this sense, would not have been perfect; and he would have had reason to have used the apostle's petition, *Luke xvii. 5.* much less would it have been made thus perfect by works; but the sense is, that hereby his faith was declared to be sincere, unfeigned, true, and genuine; just as love is said to be perfected, *1 John iv. 17.*

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which faith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

And the scripture was fulfilled. *Gen. xv. 6.* which speaks of Abraham's faith, and the imputation of it to him for righteousness; for the above action of Abraham, in offering up his son, was a clear proof of the truth of his faith, there commended; by this it was made known, what a strong faith he had in God, and what reason there was to believe that he was a justified person.

Which faith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. See the note on

Romans iv. 3. which shews both that Abraham was justified before he wrought this work, and therefore that could not be the cause or matter of his justification; but only an effect and evidence of it; and that his justification was by faith, or that object which his faith regarded, and had to do with, was his justifying righteousness.

And he was called the friend of God. *2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8.* He was loved by God with an everlasting love, who shewed acts of friendship to him; called him by his grace, and blessed him with spiritual blessings, and increased him with the increase of God; favoured him with near communion with him, honoured him with high characters, and distinguished him by peculiar marks of his favour, and reckoned his enemies and friends as his own, *Gen. xii. 3.* and Abraham, on the other hand, loved God, and shewed himself friendly to him; trusted in him, and believed every word of his; readily complied with his will, and not only yielded a cheerful obedience to his commands, but enjoined his children after him to observe them: this was a name which Abraham was well known by among the Eastern nations; hence he is called by the Mahometans, *كاهليل الله* *Kahalil Allah*, "the friend of God;" and Mahomet says himself (d), "God took Abraham for his friend;"

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified. Not as causes procuring his justification, but as effects declaring it; for the best works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteousness justifying in the sight of God, and are unprofitable in this respect; for when they are performed in the best manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore cannot justify from sin he has committed; and besides, justification in this sense would frustrate the grace of God, make void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Good works do not go before justification as causes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects.

And not by faith only. Or as without works, or a mere historical faith, which, being without works, is dead, of which the apostle is speaking; and therefore can bear no testimony to a man's justification; hence it appears, that the apostle James does not contradict the apostle Paul in *Romans iii. 28.* since they speak not of the same sort of faith; the one speaks of a mere profession of faith, a dead and lifeless one; the other of a true faith, which has Christ and his righteousness

(d) Koran, c. 4.

for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the soul. Moreover, the apostle Paul speaks of justification before God; and James speaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one speaks of a justification of their persons in the sight of God; the other of the justification and approbation of their cause, their conduct, and their faith before men, and the vindication of them from all charges and calumnies of hypocrisy, and the like; the one speaks of good works as causes, which he denies to have any place as such in justification; and the other speaks of them as effects flowing from faith, and shewing the truth of it, and so of justification by it; the one had to do with legalists and self-justifiers, who sought righteousness, not by faith, but by the works of the law, whom he opposed; and the other had to do with libertines, who cried up faith and knowledge, but had no regard to a religious life and conversation; and these things considered, will tend to reconcile the two apostles about this business.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot] See the note on Heb. xi. 31.

Justified by works] This woman was an instance of the grace of God in calling the chief of sinners, and was a true believer; and what she did, she did in faith, Heb. xi. 31. and her faith was shewn by her works to be true and genuine; and it was manifest that she was a justified person. This instance is produced with the other, to shew, that wherever there is true faith, whether in Jew or Gentile, in man or woman, in greater or lesser believers, or in such who have been greater or lesser sinners, there will be good works; and therefore that person is a vain man that talks and boasts of his faith, and depends upon it, and slight and rejects good works as unnecessary to be done.

When she had received the messengers] The spies that Joshua sent, into her house, with peace and safety.

And had sent them out another way?] Than they came in, even through the window upon the town-wall, Joshua ii. 1, 15.

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

For as the body without the spirit is dead] This simile is made use of to illustrate what the apostle

had asserted in *ŷ*. 17, 20. that as a body, when the spirit or soul is departed from it, or the breath is gone out of it, is dead, and without motion, and useless; which the Jews (*d*) express in like manner, מֵת בְּלֹא נֶפֶשׁ “the body without the spirit, or breath, is a carcass.”

So faith without works is dead also] A vain thing, useless and unprofitable, can neither justify, nor save, nor prove that a man is justified, or will be saved.

C H A P. III.

In this chapter the apostle cautions against censoriousness, and reproving others with a magisterial air; advises to bridle the tongue, and guard against the vices of it; and shews what true wisdom is, and from whence it comes. He advises the saints not to arrogate too much to themselves, and take upon them to be the censorious reprovers of others; which he dissuades from, by the consideration of the greater damnation such shall receive, and by the frailty of all men, and a common proneness to offend by words; for he must be a very singular man indeed that does not offend by words, *ŷ*. 1, 2. wherefore he exhorts them to watch over their words, and bridle their tongues; which he illustrates by the methods used with horses to keep them in subjection, and with ships, to turn them as occasion serves, and the master pleases, *ŷ*. 3, 4. and though the tongue is a little member, and not comparable to a horse, or ship, for its bulk; yet it boasts of great things, has a world of iniquity in it, and much mischief is done by it, being influenced by the powers of hell; therefore care, and all possible means should be used to restrain it, *ŷ*. 5, 6. though it is not tameable by man, only by the Lord, when all sorts of creatures are, even the most fierce and savage, and therefore are worse than they, being an unruly evil, and full of deadly poison, *ŷ*. 7, 8. And what is the most monstrous and shocking, blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth, are pronounced by the same tongue, which is used in blessing God, and cursing men made after his image, which by no means ought to be done, *ŷ*. 9, 10. and which is not to be paralleled in nature; no instance like it can be given, no fountain sending forth, in the same place, water sweet and bitter, salt and fresh, or any fig-tree bearing olives, or vine figs, *ŷ*. 11, 12. And because all this evil springs from a vain opinion men have of their own wisdom, the apostle proceeds

to give an account of true wisdom; and observes, that that shews itself in good works, in a holy conversation, attended with meekness and humility, and not in envying, strife, and lies, *y.* 13, 14. Such sort of wisdom is not from heaven, but of the earth; it is not rational; it is no better than that of brutes; yea, no other than that of devils, since where the above sins prevail, it is a hell on earth, there is nothing but confusion, and every thing that is vile and wicked, *y.* 15, 16. but, on the other hand, true wisdom is of an heavenly original, of a pure, peaceable, gentle, and tractable nature, and is full of good fruits or works, in its effects, particularly mercy, and is clear of partiality and hypocrisy, *y.* 17. and as one of its fruits is righteousness, that is sown in peace by the peace-maker, and produces it, *y.* 18.

MY brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

My brethren, be not many masters.] The apostle having dispatched the subject of faith and good works, which constitute the pure and undefiled religion mentioned in chapter i. 27. which gave rise to this discourse, he proceeds to consider the evidence of a religious man, suggested in *y.* 26. who is one that bridle the tongue; and enters into an account of the use and abuse of the tongue; and which is introduced by this exhortation; and which seems to be opposed to an affectation among the Jews, to whom James writes, of being called *Rabbi, Rabbi, or Mori, Mori, Master, Master*, condemned by Christ, *Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.* The words may be rendered, "be not many teachers;" or be not fond, and forward, and ambitious of being preachers of the word, but rather choose to be hearers of it, agreeable to the advice in chapter i. 19. *be swift to hear, slow to speak*; not but that the office of a teacher is a good work, and a very desirable one; and spiritual gifts, qualifying for it, are to be coveted with a view to the glory of God, and the good of souls; and to have many teachers is a blessing to the churches of Christ; and a large number of them is often not only proper, but absolutely necessary: but then this office should not be entered upon without suitable gifts, a divine mission, and a regular call by a church; and when entered into, should not be performed in a magisterial way, as lords over God's heritage, and as claiming a dominion over the faith of men, but as helpers of their joy, peace, and comfort; nor according to the commandments of men, but according to the oracles

of God. Or it may be, this exhortation may have respect to censorious persons, rigid and severe reprovers of others, who take upon them, in a haughty manner, to charge and rebuke others for their faults: reproof for sin ought to be given; sin should not be suffered upon the brethren; to reprove is not blame-worthy, but commendable, when it is done in a right manner, with a good spirit, and to a good end: in case of private offences, it should be privately given, and for public ones, men should be rebuked before all; but then this ought to be done in a gentle manner, and in a spirit of meekness; and when it is a clear case, and plain matter of fact, and which ought not to be exaggerated and aggravated; mole-hills are not to be made mountains of; or a man be made an offender for a word, or a matter of human frailty; and reproof should be given by persons not guilty of the same, or worse crimes themselves, and always with a good end; not to screen and cover their own vices, or to be thought more holy and religious than others, or to satisfy a revengeful spirit, but for the glory of God, and the restoring of the person that has sinned.

Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.] Should men enter into the office of teaching others without a call, or perform it negligently, or live not according to the doctrine they teach others, such would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated; and should men judge rash judgment, they themselves will be judged at a higher tribunal; and should they be too censorious, and bear too hard on others, they will have judgment without mercy.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

For in many things we offend all.] Or *we all offend*, slip and fall; no man lives without sin; in many, in most, if not in all things, a good man himself does, he sins; and this extends to the most solemn services, and best works of a good man; there is sin in his holy things, imperfections in all his performances; his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; hence no man can be justified by his works before God, nor is any man perfect in this life, so as to be without sin in himself: the apostle includes himself in this account, and that not out of modesty merely, or in a complaining way, but as matter of fact, and what he found in himself, and observed in the conduct of his life: and now this is given as a reason, why persons should not be over-forward of teaching others,

others, since in many instances in common speech and conversation, men are apt to offend, and much more in a work which requires a multitude of words; or why men should be careful how they charge, censure, and reprove others, in a rash, furious, and unchristian manner; since they themselves are in the body and may be tempted, and are attended with many infirmities, slips, and falls in common life.

If any man offend not in word] From slips and falls in general, the apostle proceeds to the slips of the tongue; and to the use and abuse of that member; and his sense is, that if a man has so much guard upon himself, and such a command over his tongue, and so much wisdom to use it, as to give no offence by it, to his fellow-creatures and fellow-christians,

The same is a perfect man] Not that he is perfect in himself, and without sin, that is denied before; unless this is considered as a mere hypothesis, and by way of concession; that could there be found out a man that never, for instance, offends in word in any one part of life, that man may be allowed, and be set down to be a perfect man; but no such man is to be found, and therefore none perfect: but rather the sense is, that he who in common is so careful of his speech, as not to offend his brethren, may be looked upon as a sincere, and truly religious man; see chap. i. 26. or he may be accounted a wise and prudent man, such an one as in *1. 13.* he is not a babe in understanding, a child in conduct, but a grown man; at full age; a perfect man; in which sense the word is used in *1 Cor. ii. 6.* *Heb. v. 14.*

And able also to bridle the whole body] Either to govern the whole body, the church, to teach a society of christians, and to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding; or rather, as he appears to be able to bridle that member of the body, the tongue, so likewise to be able, through the grace of God, to keep under the whole body, that sin shall not reign in it, or the lusts of it be in common obeyed.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths] By this, and the following simile, the apostle not only expresses the smallness of that member of the body, which is like the bit in the horse's mouth, and the helm of a ship, but the good use of it, and the great influence it has over the whole body. Horses are without understanding, and need direction in what path to go, and are strong, and

would be unruly, and ungovernable, unless bits and bridles were put into their mouths.

That they may obey us] And go in the way we would have them.

And we turn about their whole body] Of the horse, this way and that way, as is thought best, by the help of the bit and bridle: and of such use is the tongue to the natural body, that being bridled itself, it bridles, directs, and governs the whole body; and its influence on bodies, and societies of men, and christians, is like that of the bit in the horse's mouth; who, like horses, would be unruly and ungovernable, were it not for the force of language, the power of words, and strength of argument.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great] Of so large a bulk, of such a prodigious size, and are such unwieldy vessels.

And are driven of fierce winds] With great vehemence, rapidity, and swiftness.

Yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth] The helm, or tiller of a ship, is a beam or piece of timber fastened into the rudder, and so coming forward into the steerage, where he that stands at helm, steers the ship (*r*), who is here called the governor; or "he that directs," as the word may be rendered; that is, that steers; the word for *helm*, is translated *rudder* in *Acts xxvii. 40.* and the helm or tiller is sometimes, though improperly, called the *rudder* itself (*f*); and this is very small in comparison of the bulk of the ship that is guided by it. Aristotle (*g*) calls it, *ωκυπλοῦς μηχανή*, "a small helm," as the apostle here does, and accounts for it how large ships should be moved and steered by it. And so, though the tongue is to the rest of the body, as a small helm to a large ship, yet, like that, it has great influence over the whole body, to check it, when it is carrying away with the force of its appetites and passions: and so churches, societies, and bodies of christians, which are large and numerous, and are like ships upon the ocean, tossed to and fro with tempests, driven by Satan's temptations, and the world's persecution, and ready to be carried away with the wind of false doctrine, yet are influenced and directed aright by

(*r*) Chambers's Cyclopædia in the word *Helm*.
in the word *Rudder*.

(*f*) *Ibid.*, in

(*g*) *Quæst. Mechanic. c. 5.*

by those that are at the helm, the faithful ministers of the word, who say to them, *This is the way, walk in it.*

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth !

Even so the tongue is a little member] Like the bit in the horse's mouth, or like the helm of a ship.

And boasteth great things] And does them; for this word may be taken in a good sense, a bridled and sanctified tongue, that is influenced by the grace of God, and directed by the Spirit of God, as it speaks great and good things, it has great power, weight, and influence: the tongue of the just is as choice silver, and the lips of the righteous feed many, *Prov. x. 20, 21.* the Gospel, as preached by Christ's faithful ministers, who are the churches tongue, when it comes not in word only, but in power, is the power of God unto salvation: faith comes by hearing it, and hearing, by this word; by it souls are convinced, converted, and comforted, enlightened, quickened, and sanctified.

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth !] What vast quantities of wood, large forests, stately buildings, and populous towns, and cities, are at once seized on by a little fire, a few sparks, and in a short time, burnt down, and utterly destroyed. One of the proverbs of Ben Syria, is, " Burning fire kindles great heaps ;" suggesting, that an evil tongue does great mischief, as did the tongue of Doeg the Edomite, as the gloss upon it observes: from hence the apostle passes to consider the abuse or vices of the tongue.

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

And the tongue is a fire] It is like to fire, very useful in its place to warm and comfort; so is the tongue in christian conversation, and in the ministry of the word; the hearts of God's children burn within them, whilst they are talking together, and whilst the scriptures of truth are opening to them; but as fire should be carefully watched, and kept, so should men take heed to their ways, that they sin not with their tongue, and keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile; for as fire kindles and rises up into a flame, so unchaste, angry, and passionate words, stir up the flame of lust, anger, envy, and

revenge; and as fire is of a spreading nature, so are lies, scandal, and evil reports, vented by the tongue; and as fire devours all that comes in its way, such are the words of an evil tongue; and therefore are called *devouring words*, Psalm lii. 4. they devour the good names of men, and corrupt their good manners, and destroy those who make use of them; and what wood is to fire, and coals to burning coals, that are whisperers, talebearers, backbiters, and contentious persons to strife, *Prov. xxvi. 20, 21.*

A world of iniquity] That is, as the world is full of things, and full of sin, for it lies in wickedness, so is the tongue full of iniquity; there is a world of it in it; it abounds with it; it cannot well be said how much sin is in it, and done, or occasioned by it; as blasphemy against God, Father, Son, and Spirit; cursing of men, imprecations on themselves, their souls and bodies, and on others, with a multitude of profane and dreadful oaths; obscene, filthy and unchaste words; angry, wrathful, and passionate ones; lies, flatteries, reproaches, backbitings, whisperings, tale-bearings, &c. And the Jews say, that he that uses an evil tongue multiplies transgression, and that it is equal to idolatry, adultery, and murder (b), and the cause of all sin. The Syriac version renders this clause thus, " and the world of iniquity is as wood ;" or the branch of a tree; the tongue is fire, and a wicked world is fuel to it.

So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body] The body politic, a whole nation, filling it with contention, strife, division, and confusion; and the ecclesiastical body, the church, by sowing discord, fomenting animosities, making parties, and spreading errors and heresies; whereby the temple of God is defiled, and the natural body, and the several members of it, even the whole person of a man, soul and body, bringing upon him a blot of infamy and reproach, never to be wiped off; as for instance, the vice of the tongue, lying, does; and oftentimes thro' the tongue, the actions done in the body, which seem good, are quite spoiled.

And setteth on fire the course of nature] Or " wheel of nature ;" the natural body, as before, in which there is a continual rotation or circulation of the blood, by which it is supported; this is the wheel broken at the cistern at death, in *Eccles. xii. 6.* or the course of a man's life and actions, yea, of all generations, and the vicissitudes and changes which have happened in them, on which the tongue has a great influence; and so

(b) T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 100. 2.

so the Syriac version renders it, “and sets on fire” the series of our genealogies, or of our generations, which run like wheels:” or it may intend the frame of nature, the whole fabric of the universe, and the general conflagration of it, which will be owing to the tongue; or because mens tongues are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory, because of the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Christ, and his people, of which they will be convinced, by flames of fire about them.

And it is set on fire of bell] That is, by the devil; for as heaven sometimes is put for God, who dwells in heaven, *Matt. xxi. 25. Luke xv. 18.* so hell is put for the devil, whose habitation it is; see *Matt. xvi. 18.* and the sense is, that the tongue is influenced, instigated, and stirred up by Satan, to speak many evil things; and it will be hereafter set on fire in hell, as the tongue of the rich man in *Luke xvi. 24.* To which purpose are those words of the Talmud (i); as it is said, *Psal. cxx. 3, 4.* “*What shall be done to thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper; there is no arrow but the tongue, according to Jer. ix. 8. and there is no mighty one but God, Isaiah xlii. 13. coals of juniper, הֵיוּ גִיחֹם “these are hell.”*

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

For every kind of beasts, and of birds] Or the nature of them, as it is in the Greek text; however fierce, as beasts of prey are, or shy, as the fowls of the air be.

And of serpents, and of things in the sea] The fishes there.

Is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind] Or “by human nature;” by the wit and industry of man; by the various ways, means and methods, devised by man. So Pliny (k) relates, that elephants, lions and tygers, among beasts, and the eagle among birds, and crocodiles, asps and other serpents, and fishes of the sea, have been tamed: though some think, this is only to be understood of their being mastered and subdued by one means or another; or of their being despoiled of their power, or of their poison: and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, “subjected to human nature.”

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

But the tongue can no man tame] Either his own, or others; not his own, for the man, that has the greatest guard upon himself, his words and actions; yet, what through pride or passion, or one lust or another in his heart, at one time or another, bolts out vain, idle, angry and sinful words: and he, that does not, may be set down for a perfect man indeed: nor can he tame, or restrain the tongue of others, from detraction, calumnies, backbitings and whisperings; who say, their lips are their own, and who is Lord over us? No man can, by his own power and strength, tame, or subdue his tongue, or restrain it from evils it is habituated to, be it lying, cursing, swearing, or what else: God, by his Spirit, power and grace, can, and often does, change the note of the curser, swearer, liar, and blasphemer; but no man can do this, though he can tame beasts, birds, serpents, and fishes; which shews the tongue to be worse than any thing to be found in the whole compass of nature.

It is an unruly evil] An evil it is, for it is a world of iniquity; and an unruly one, being more so than the horse and mule, which are without understanding, who are kept in and governed, and turned any way, by the bit and bridle: but though, in nature, the tongue is fenced by a double fence of the lips and teeth, this is not sufficient to restrain it; it breaks all bounds, and is not to be kept in by nature, art, or argument: nothing, but the grace of God, can, in any measure govern it, or lay an embargo on it.

Full of deadly poison] Which, privately, secretly and gradually, destroys the characters, credit and reputation of men; and is of fatal consequence in families, neighbourhoods, churches and states.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

Therewith bless we God, even the Father] Of Jesus Christ, and of spirits, and of mercies: this is the instrument that is used in blessing God daily, for every meal that is eaten; and in joining with the saints, though only verbally and outwardly, in blessing God for all spiritual blessings in Christ, both in prayer and in singing psalms.

And therewith curse we men] Make imprecations, and wish evils upon them.

Which are made after the similitude of God] As man was originally, *Gen. i. 26, 27.* and though sin has greatly defaced it, yet there are still some remains of it: and now, what an absurd and monstrous

(i) T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Yalkut, par. 2, fol. 127. 2.

(k) Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 9. 16, 17. & 10. 5, 44.

monstrous thing is this, that one and the same instrument should be used in blessing God, the Father of all creatures, and in cursing his children, his offspring, as all men are by creation, and bear some resemblance to him.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing] Which is not only a contradiction, but unnatural, as well as wicked and sinful.

My brethren, these things ought not so to be] In any, and much less in professors of religion: such things are unbecoming men, are a scandal upon human nature, and exceeding unworthy of the Christian name; see *Psalm* l. 16, 19, 20.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

Doth a fountain send forth at the same place] Or *hole*; for at divers places and at different times, as *Pliny* (m) observes, it may send forth

Sweet water and bitter] And it is reported (n), there is a lake with the *Trogloditæ*, a people in *Ethiopia*, which becomes thrice a day bitter, and then as often sweet; but then it does not yield sweet water and bitter at the same time: this simile is used to shew how unnatural it is, that blessing and cursing should proceed out of the same mouth.

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries?] Every tree bears fruit according to its kind; a fig-tree produces figs, and an olive-tree olive-berries; a fig-tree does not produce olive-berries, or an olive-tree figs; and neither of them both.

Either a vine, figs?] Or fig-trees, grapes; or either of them, figs and grapes.

So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh] The *Alexandrian* copy reads, "neither can the salt water yield sweet water;" that is, the sea cannot yield sweet or fresh water: the *Syriac* version renders it, "neither can salt water be made sweet:" but naturalists say, it may be made sweet, by being strained through sand: the design of these similes is to observe, how absurd a thing it is, that a man should both bless and curse with his tongue.

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Who is a wise man] Meaning, not in things natural and civil, or merely moral, but in things spiritual: and he is a wise man, who is both wise to do good, and wise unto salvation; who has learned to know his own ignorance, folly and stupidity; for the first lesson in the school of spiritual wisdom, is for a man to know that he is a fool: and he is a wise man, who considers his latter end, thinks of a future state, and what will become of him in another world; and who builds his faith and hope of eternal salvation, on the sure and only foundation, the rock *Christ Jesus*; and who takes up a profession of religion, upon principles of grace, and with views to the glory of God, and, upon mature deliberation, reckoning the cost, and what he must expect to meet with; and which he holds fast, without wavering, and yet does not depend upon it; and who walks, circumspectly, and with wisdom, towards them that are without; and who observes both providences and promises, for the encouragement of his faith; and keeps looking to the mark for the prize, preferring heavenly things to earthly ones.

And endued with knowledge among you?] As he is, who is endued with the knowledge of himself; of the impurity of his nature, and the plague of his heart; and of his impotency and inability to do any thing that is spiritually good of himself; and of the imperfection and insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and of his lost state and condition by nature, how deserving of the wrath of God, and obnoxious to the curses of the law; and how miserable he must be, without the grace of God, and righteousness of *Christ*: and who is also endued with the knowledge of *Christ*, so as to see a fulness, suitableness and ability in him, as a Saviour; so as to love him, approve of him as such, and trust in him; which knowledge is always practical, and soul-humbling; and the least degree of it saving; and though it is imperfect, it is growing, and will, at last, come to perfection: now such a man is a *Gnostic*, in the best sense; for this question is put with a view to the *Gnostics* of those times, who valued themselves upon their knowledge, and despised practical religion and godliness: hence it follows,

Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom] Such an one ought to perform good works, and he will perform them; and it is right in him to shew them forth, that they

(m) *Nat. Hist.* l. 8. c. 203.
l. 23. c. 23. p. 115.

(n) *Isidor Hispal.* *Originum*,

they may be a means of others glorifying God upon the sight of them; and that they may be evidences of the truth of faith in themselves to others; and that they may be for the imitation of others; and that they may put to silence, and stop the mouths of false accusers, and adorn the Gospel, and recommend religion: and these should be shewn forth *out of a good conversation*; not in a single act or two, but in a series and course of living; which may be said to be *good*, when it is ordered aright, according to the word of God, and is honest among the Gentiles, and upright and holy; and is as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and is worthy of the vocation of God to grace and glory; and when it is influenced by the grace of God; and the works shewn out of it, and in it, are done in faith, from love, in the strength of Christ, and are directed to the glory of God: and all this should be *with meekness of wisdom*; in a wise and humble manner, without trusting to and depending upon such works for justification and salvation; and without glorying in them, and boasting of them; acknowledging the deficiency and imperfection of them, and his own weakness in the performance of them; and ascribing them to the power and grace of God, by the assistance of which they are performed.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts] Though these may not be expressed by words, or actions: envy at the happiness of others, whether at the external blessings of providence, as riches and honours, or at the internal endowments of their minds, as their wisdom and knowledge, their parts and abilities, is a root of bitterness in the heart, which bears wormwood and gall, and produces bitter effects in the persons in whom it is; it embitters their minds against their neighbours and friends; it is rottenness in their bones, and slays and destroys those who are so silly as to be governed by it; and also in the persons the objects of it; for who can stand before it? and strife in the mind, or an intention to strive and quarrel with others, who are the objects of envy, is very sinful, and of pernicious consequence: and if these be somented and cherished in the minds and breasts of men, though they may not outwardly shew themselves, yet

Glory not] Let not such boast of their being Gnostics, wise men, and endued with knowledge; they are far from deserving such a character; and such boasting is contrary to truth, yea, is lying against it, as follows:

And lie not against the truth] For, for a man to assert himself to be a wise and knowing man, and yet cherishes bitterness in his heart, and quarrelling and contention in his mind, arising from envy, at the equal or superior knowledge of others, he lies both against the truth of God's word and his own conscience, which condemn such things, as ignorance, folly, and madness.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

This wisdom descendeth not from above] If it must be called *wisdom*, as it ought not; an envious, quarrelsome, and contentious spirit does not deserve such a name; yet if any will call it so, or can think that a man of such a disposition is a man possessed of wisdom; it is such wisdom as does not come from above, from heaven, from the Father of lights, from Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation: what the Jews say (o) of the wisdom of Egypt, may be said of this, that it is חכמה תחתונה "wisdom from below, or inferior wisdom," as it follows.

But is earthly, sensual, devilish] It is *earthly*, or of the earth, and springs from thence; and it is only conversant about earthly things, and is only suitable to earthly minds: it is *sensual*, or *natural*; what a natural man, one destitute of the Spirit of God, and without the knowledge of the things of the Spirit, may have; it is what is acquired by the mere strength of nature, and only relates to natural things; and is only agreeable to corrupt nature, or to a natural and unregenerate man: yea, it is *devilish*, or such as the devil himself has; and which comes from him, and being used, serves only his kingdom and interest.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

For where envying and strife is] Where these are cherished in the heart, and especially where they break out into action, in families, neighbourhoods, states, or churches,

There is confusion and every evil work] These occasion disturbances, raise uneasiness, make disturbance, and cause tumults whenever they appear; and put persons upon doing every thing that is wicked, to gratify such insatiable lusts.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits,

fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

But the wisdom that is from above] Which has God for its author; which is infused into the soul by the Spirit of God; and leads into the knowledge of things that are above, of heavenly things; and which only is true wisdom and knowledge; and those who are possessed of it, are the only true Gnostics; for which, see the note on *1. 13.* namely, the grace of God: this wisdom

Is first pure] It is pure in itself, it is free from every thing that is earthly, carnal, or sensual, or devilish; it produces purity of heart, of life, and conversation; and is the means of keeping persons pure and chaste, and free from impure lusts, lusts of uncleanness, pride, envy, wrath, &c. which prevail in carnal and unregenerate men.

Then peaceable] It inclines and engages those who have it to live in peace with the saints, and even with all men; with those of their own household, with their neighbours, yea, with their enemies: it is also

Gentle] Or makes men gentle, moderate, and humane, so as that they bear, and forbear; they bear with the infirmities of the weak; readily forgive injuries done them; do not rigidly exact what is their due, but recede from their just right, for the sake of peace and love; and do not bear hard upon others for their failings, but cover them with the mantle of love.

And easy to be entreated] Or those who have it, readily yield to the superior judgments and stronger reasonings of others; and are easily induced to hope and believe all things, and entertain a good opinion of men and their conduct; and are far from being proud, arrogant, obstinate, and overbearing.

Full of mercy and good fruits] Of compassion and beneficence to the poor; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the widows and fatherless in their affliction; and doing all other good works and duties, both with respect to God and man, as fruits of grace, and of the Spirit.

Without partiality] To one another; or making a difference between them; shewing no respect to persons; bestowing upon the poor and indigent, without any distinction.

And without hypocrisy] Either with respect to God, or man; not making a shew of that which they have not, or do not intend.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

And the fruit of righteousness] Which is either eternal life, which is the fruit of Christ's righteousness, and shall be enjoyed by all those who are justified by it; and who, in consequence of it, through the grace of God, live soberly, righteously, and godly; see *Rom. vi. 22.* or else what is enjoyed in this life, as the fruit and effect of a righteous and holy conversation, which is peace of conscience: and may be truly called, the peaceable fruit of righteousness; see *Isa. xxxii. 17.*

Is sown in peace of them that make peace] That is, either such as are possessed of that wisdom which is peaceable, and makes them so; that peace which they make, pursue after, exercise, and maintain, is a seed which being sown by them, will, in the issue, be followed with eternal happiness and felicity; see *Matt. v. 9.* or such who live a godly life and conversation, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, and among the rest, with this of making and preserving peace among men, shall enjoy, as what will spring up from such good seed sown, much conscience-peace, and spiritual pleasure of mind: righteousness and peace promise a large and comfortable harvest both here and hereafter.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apostle gives the true cause of contentions and strifes; and cautions against intemperance, covetousness, pride, detraction, and vain confidence. Having in the latter part of the preceding chapter, inveighed against strife and contention, he here shews from whence they spring, from a covetous desire of riches and honour; and which yet are not obtained, because they did not ask these things of God with submission to his will; or they asked with a wrong view, namely, to gratify their lusts, *1. 1, 2, 3.* and he dissuades from such unlawful desires, partly because they were no other than adultery; and partly because indulging them, was declaring themselves enemies of God, *1. 4.* and he deters from pride, under the name of envy, proud men being generally envious; from the sense of the scripture, which says, not in vain, that the spirit lusts unto it; and from the consequence of it, such as are proud being resisted by the Lord, when he gives more grace to humble ones, *1. 5, 6.* hence follow several exhortations, and various duties relating to humility; as to submit to God and resist the devil, encouraged thereunto by this motive, he will flee, *1. 7.* to draw nigh to God in a way of religious worship, who will draw nigh in a way of grace to his people; to purity of action and of heart, or to that which is outward and inward, *1. 8.*

ψ. 8. to be humbled, mourn, and weep, instead of joy and laughter, ψ. 9. to lie low before the Lord, who will raise such up, ψ. 10. and not to speak evil of any one, since this is judging a brother; nay, a speaking evil of the law, and a judging of that; which is to invade the prerogative of God, the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; and therefore one man should not take upon him to judge another, ψ. 11, 12. and as another instance of great neglect of God and his providence, and disrespect unto it, the apostle takes notice of a common practice among men, and even professors of religion, who resolve to go to such a place, and continue so long, and there make merchandise, and promise themselves success; not considering what frail, short-lived creatures they are, and how much all depends upon the will of God; and which they should consider, submit to, and be determined by, ψ. 13—15. and he reproves them for their boastings and joy in them, as evil, ψ. 16. and observes, that it is not enough to know what is right and good, unless it is done; and that such knowledge is but an aggravation of the evil of sin committed, ψ. 17.

FROM whence come wars and fightings among you? *come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members.*

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Which are to be understood, not of public and national wars, such as might be between the Jews and other nations at this time; for the apostle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, as a nation, or body politic, but to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and to such of them as were christians; nor were christians in general as yet increased, and become such large bodies, or were whole nations become christians, and much less at war one against another, which has been the case since; and which, when it is, generally speaking arises from a lust after an increase of power; from the pride and ambitious views of men, and their envy at the happiness of other princes and states: nor do these design theological debates and disputes, or contentions about religious principles; but rather lawsuits commenced before heathen magistrates by the rich, to the oppression of the poor; see chapter ii. 6. though it seems best of all to interpret them, of those stirrings and bustlings, strifes, contentions, and quarrels, about honours and riches; endeavouring to get them by unlawful methods, at least, at the expence of their own peace, and that of others.

Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members] As pride, envy, covetousness, ambition, &c. which, like so many soldiers, are stationed and quartered in the members of the body, and war against the soul; for in the believer, or converted man however, there is at it were two armies; a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind; the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and from this inward war arise external ones; or at least from the corruption of nature, which militates against all that is good, all quarrels and contentions, whether public or private, of a greater or lesser nature, and consequence, spring.

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Ye lust, and have not] The apostle proceeds to shew the unsuccessfulness of many in their desires and pursuits after worldly things; some might be like the sluggard, whose soul desireth all good things, and yet he has nothing, *Prov. xiii. 4.* because he does not make use of any means, even of such as proper and necessary, and ought to be used.

Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain] Some, instead of kill, which seems not so agreeable, read *envy*; and then the sense is, they envy at the good and happiness of others, and covet after another's property, but cannot enjoy it; all such envy and covetousness are fruitless, as well as sinful.

Ye fight and war, yet ye have not] Go to law one with another about each other's property; or rather, make a great stir and bustle to get the things of the world; rise early, and sit up late; strive who should get most, and quarrel about what is gotten. and seek to get all advantages of one another; and yet still have not, what at least is desired and strove for.

Because ye ask not] Of God, whose blessing only makes rich: instead of all this worldly stir and bustle, and these strivings and quarrellings with one another, it would be much more advisable, and in the issue be found to turn to more account, to pray to God for a blessing on your endeavours; and to ask of him the good and necessary things of life, in submission to his will, and with thankfulness for what he has bestowed.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Ye ask, and receive not] Some there were that did ask of God the blessings of his goodness and providence, and yet these were not bestowed on them; the reason was,

Because ye ask amiss] Not in the faith of a divine promise; nor with thankfulness for past mercies; nor with thankfulness for past mercies; nor with submission to the will of God; nor with a right end, to do good to others, and to make use of what might be bestowed, for the honour of God, and the interest of Christ: but

That ye may consume it upon your lusts] Indulge to intemperance and luxury; as the man that had much goods laid up for many years, did to the neglect of his own soul, *Luke xii. 19.* or the rich man, who spent all upon his back and his belly, and took no notice of Lazarus at his gate, *Luke xvi. 19.*

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses] Not who were literally such, but in a figurative and metaphorical sense: as he is an adulterer that removes his affections from his own wife, and sets them upon another woman; and she is an adulteress that loves not her husband, but places her love upon another man; so such men and women are adulterers and adulteresses, who, instead of loving God, whom they ought to love with all their hearts and souls, set their affections upon the world, and the things of it: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the word *adulteresses*: these the apostle addresses in the following manner,

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?] That an immoderate love for the good things of the world, and a prevailing desire after the evil things of it, and a delight in the company and conversation of the men of the world, and a conformity to, and compliance with the sinful manners and customs of the world, are so many declarations of war with God, and acts of hostility upon him; and shew the enmity of the mind against him, and must be highly displeasing to him, and resented by him.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God] Whosoever is in league with the one, must be an enemy to the other; God and mammon cannot be loved and served by the same persons, at the same time; the one will be loved, and the other hated; the one will be at-

tended to, and the other neglected: this may be known both from reason and from scripture, particularly from *Matt. vi. 24.*

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

Do you think that the scripture saith in vain] Some think that the apostle refers to a particular passage of scripture in the Old Testament, and that he took it from *Genesis vi. 3.* as some; or from *Exodus xx. 5.* as others; or from *Deut. vii. 2, 5.* or from *Job v. 2.* or from *Prou. xxi. 10.* others think he had in view some text in the New Testament; either *Rom. xii. 2.* or *Gal. v. 17.* and some have imagined, that he refers to a passage in the Apocryphal book of *Wisdom*, chap. i. 4. and others have been of opinion, that it is taken out of some book of scripture then extant, but now lost, which by no means can be allowed of: the generality of interpreters, who suppose a particular text of scripture is referred to, fetch it from *Numb. xi. 29.* but it seems best of all to conclude, that the apostle has no regard to any one particular passage of scripture, in which the following words are expressly had, since no such passage appears; but that his meaning is, the sense of the scripture every where, where it speaks of this matter, is to this purpose: nor does it say this, or any thing else in vain; whatever is written there, is to answer some end, as for learning, edification, and comfort, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; neither with respect to what is before suggested, that what is asked in a right manner, and for a right end, shall be given; and that the love of the world, and the love of God, are things incompatible; nor with respect to what follows.

The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?] That is, the depraved spirit of man, the spirit of an unregenerate man; that as it is prone to every lust, and prompts to every sin, the imagination of the thought of man's heart being evil, and that continually, so it instigates to envy the happiness of others; see *Gen. vi. 5.* and chap. viii. 21. or this may be put as a distinct question from the other, *Does the spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy?* That is, the holy Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of his people, as in his temple: the Ethiopic version reads, "the holy Spirit;" and then the sense is, does he lust to envy? No; he lusts against the flesh, and the works of it, and envy among the rest; see *Gal. v. 17, 21.* but he does not lust to it, or provoke to it, or put persons upon it; nor does he, as the Arabic version renders it, "desire that we should envy;" he is
a Spirit

a Spirit of grace; he bestows grace and favours upon men; and is so far from envying, or putting others upon envying any benefit enjoyed by men, that he increases them, adds to them, and enlarges them, as follows.

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

But he giveth more grace] The Arabic version adds, *to us*; the Ethiopic version, *to you*; and the Syriac version reads the whole thus; “but our Lord gives more grace to us; or greater grace,” than the world can give, whose friendship is courted by men; the least measure of grace, of faith, and hope, and love, and of a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and interest in him, and of peace, joy, and comfort, is more worth than all the world, and every thing in it: or greater grace, more favours than the saints are able to ask or think; so Solomon had more favours given him than he could think of asking for: or greater grace, and larger measures of it, even of spiritual light and knowledge, under the Gospel-dispensation, than under the former dispensation; or where God bestows gifts qualifying for service and usefulness, and these are made use of and employed for such purposes, he gives more: or this may refer to internal grace wrought by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of his people; more of which he may be said to give, when he causes it to abound, as to its acts and exercises; when faith grows exceedingly, hope revives, and is lively, and abounds through his power and influence, and love to God and Christ, and one another, abounds yet more and more; when there is a growth in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, so that this grace becomes a well of living waters, springing up into eternal life, which at last will have its perfection in glory.

Wherefore he saith] Either the Spirit that gives more grace, or the scripture, or God in the scripture, in *Prov. iii. 34.*

God resisteth the proud] Or scorns the scorners; he rejects them that trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others; that say, “Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou;” that are proud of themselves, their enjoyments, their gifts, their external righteousness, and holiness; and are full, and rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; these he opposes, he sets himself against, he thrusts them away from him, he sends them away empty, and scatters them in the imagination of their own hearts; and in the things in which they deal proudly,

he is above them; he sits in the heavens and laughs at them, and frustrates all their schemes.

But he giveth grace unto the humble] Who are sensible of their own vileness and meanness, and acknowledge it; who think the meanest of themselves, and the best of others; and do not envy the gifts and graces of God bestowed upon others, but rejoice at them; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God; and ingenuously confess the deficiency of their duties, and the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God; and that when they have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants: now to these, God gives grace; he not only gives grace at first, to make them humble, but he gives them more grace, or increases what he gives: grace is God’s gift; he gives all the grace that is in Christ, and all the blessings of grace that are in the covenant, and all the grace that is in the hearts of his people; as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, self-denial, resignation to his will, and every degree of spiritual knowledge; and grace is only his gift; men cannot give it to themselves, nor can the best of men give it to others; not godly parents to their children; nor ministers to those to whom they preach; no, nor the angels in heaven; nor is it to be obtained by the works of men: it is a free gift; it is given of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, to whom, and when, and in what measure he pleases; to which he is not induced by any motives in men, for they have nothing in them to move him to it; and it is given by him absolutely, without conditions, not suspending it till the performance of them; and he gives it cheerfully, and not grudgingly, largely, bountifully, and in great abundance.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Submit yourselves therefore to God] To the will of God, with respect to worldly things, and be content with such things as are enjoyed; and be satisfied with the portion that is allotted; it is right and best for the people of God to leave themselves with him to choose their inheritance for them, since by all their anxious cares, their striving and struggling, their impatient desires, wars and fightings, as they cannot add one cubit to their stature, so nothing to their worldly substance; and it becomes them to submit to God in all afflictive dispensations of his providence, and be still, and know that he is God; as well as to submit to his way and method of salvation by Christ, and particularly to the righteousness of

Christ for justification ; and to depend upon him for supplies of grace in the discharge of every duty, and the exercise of every grace.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you] Satan is to be looked upon as an enemy, and to be opposed as such, and to be watched and guarded against ; the whole armour of God should be taken and made use of, particularly the weapon of prayer, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the shield of faith ; and also the grace of humility, than which nothing is more opposite to him : he is a proud spirit, and he endeavours to swell men with pride of themselves ; and when he has worked them up to such a pitch, he is then master of them, and can manage them as he pleases ; but a poor, humble believer, with whom God dwells, to whom he gives more grace, and who comes forth not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God, as David against Goliath, and who owns his vileness and sinfulness, and flies to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, Satan knows not what to do with him, he is puzzled, baffled, and confounded ; such he leaves, from such he flees ; he does not like the power of prayer, nor the strength of faith, nor the sharpness of the two-edged sword, the word of God, nor the humble believer's staff, bag, scrip, and sling.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you] This must be understood consistently with the perfection of God's immensity and omnipresence : the saints draw nigh to God, when they present their bodies in his sanctuary ; when they tread in his courts, and attend his ordinances ; where they always find it good for them to draw nigh unto him ; and blessed is the man that approaches to him in faith and fear : they draw nigh to him when they come to the throne of his grace, for grace and mercy to help them ; when they draw near to him in prayer with true hearts, and lift them up with their hands to God ; when in the exercise of faith and hope they enter within the veil, and come up even to his seat, and lay hold on him as their covenant God and Father ; and he draws nigh to them by granting them his gracious presence, by communicating his love to them, by applying the blessings of his grace, by helping them in times of need and distress, and by protecting them from their enemies ; the contrary to

which is expressed by standing afar off from them. Now this is not to be understood, as if men could first draw nigh to God before he draws nigh to them : for as God first loves, so he first moves ; he takes the first step, and in conversion turns and draws men to himself ; though this does not respect first conversion, but after-acts in consequence of it ; nor is to be considered as a condition of the grace and favour of God, in drawing nigh to his people, but is expressive of what is their duty, and an encouragement to it.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double minded] The persons addressed, are not the profane men of the world, but sinners in Zion, formal professors, hypocritical persons ; who speak with a double tongue to men, and who draw nigh to God with their mouths, but not with their hearts ; who halt between two opinions, and are unstable in all their ways : *cleansing of their hands and hearts*, denotes the purity of outward conversation, and of the inward affections ; and supposes impurity both of flesh and spirit, that the body and all its members, the soul and all its powers and faculties are unclean ; and yet not that men have a power to cleanse themselves, either from the filth of an external conversation, or from inward pollution of the heart ; though a man attempts the one, he fails in it ; and who can say he has done the other ? *Job ix. 30, 31. Prov. xx. 9.* This is not to be done by ceremonial ablutions, moral services, or evangelical ordinances ; this is God's work only, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins, by sprinkling clean water upon them ; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it ; and from the prayers of the saints, that God would wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin, and create clean hearts in them : and yet such exhortations are not in vain ; since they may be useful to convince men of their pollution, who are pure in their own eyes, as these hypocritical, nominal professors, might be ; and to bring them to a sense of their inability to cleanse themselves, and of the necessity of being cleansed elsewhere ; and to lead them to inquire after the proper means of cleansing, and so to the fountain of Christ's blood, which only cleanses from all sin.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep] Not in a bare external way ; not by afflicting the body with fastings and scourgings, by renting of garments, and

and clothing with sackcloth, and putting ashes on the head, and other such outward methods of humiliation; but *afflicting* the soul is meant, an inward mourning and weeping over the plague of the heart, the impurity of nature, and the various sins of life; after a godly sort, and because contrary to a God of infinite love and grace; in an evangelic way, looking to Jesus, and being affected with the pardoning grace and love of God in Christ.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness] Meaning their carnal joy, on account of their friendship with the world, and their enjoyment of the things of it, since they consumed them on their lusts, and which betrayed enmity to God.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord] Which is done when men, before the Lord, and from their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, acknowledge their meanness and unworthiness, their vileness, sinfulness, and wretchedness, and implore the grace and mercy of God in Christ; as did Abraham, Jacob, Job, Isaiah, Paul, and the publican; and when they walk humbly with God, acknowledging they can do nothing without him; owning their dependence on his grace, and ascribing all they have and are unto it.

And he shall lift you up] This is God's usual way, to lift up the meek, and exalt those that humble themselves; he lifts them from the dunghill, to set them among princes; he gives them a place and a name in his house, better than of sons and daughters; he adorns them with his grace; he clothes them with the righteousness of his Son; he grants them nearness to himself; and at last will introduce them into his kingdom and glory.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren] The apostle here returns to his former subject concerning the vices of the tongue, he had been upon in the preceding chapter, *†*. 6—10. and here mentions one, which professors of religion were too much guilty of, and that is, speaking evil one of another; which is done either by raising false reports, and bringing false charges; or by aggra-

vating failings and infirmities; or by lessening and depreciating characters, and endeavouring to bring others into discredit and disesteem among men; this is a very great evil, and what the men of the world do, and from them it is expected; but for the saints to speak evil one of another, to sit and speak against a brother, and slander an own mother's son, is barbarous and unnatural.

He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law] He that tale-bears and backbites his brother, his fellow-member, and detracts from his good name and character, and takes upon him to judge his heart, and his state, as well as to condemn his actions, he speaks evil of the law; and judges and condemns that, as if that forbid a thing that was lawful, even tale-bearing and detraction, *Lev. xix. 16.* or by speaking evil of him for a good thing he does, he blames and condemns the law, as though it commanded a thing that was evil; and by passing sentence upon his brother, he takes upon him the province of the law, which is to accuse, charge, convince, pronounce guilty, and condemn.

But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law] As is thy duty, and would best become thee.

But a judge] And so such a person not only infringes the right of the law, but assumes the place of the judge and lawgiver himself; whereas, as follows,

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

There is one lawgiver] The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions add, "and judge." Who is the one only Lord God, *Isaiah xxxiii. 22.* This is a character that may be applied to God the Father, who gave the law to the people of Israel, both the judicial and ceremonial law, and also the moral law; from his right hand went a fiery law, and to him belongs the giving of it; and also to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, and Lawgiver in his house; who has given out commandments to be observed, and laws of discipline for the right ordering of his house, and kingdom, to be regarded; and particularly the new commandment of love, which is eminently called the law of Christ; and which is most apparently broke, by detraction and speaking evil one of another: now there may be inferior and subordinate lawgivers, as Judah is said to be God's lawgiver, and Moses is said to command the Jews

a law; yet there is but one supreme, universal, and perfect lawgiver, who is God; and though there may be many lawgivers in things political, whose legislative power is to be obeyed, both for the Lord's sake, and for conscience sake; yet in things religious, and relating to conscience, God is the only lawgiver, who is to be hearkened unto.

Who is able to save and to destroy? This is true of God the Father, who is able to save, and does save by his Son Jesus Christ, and even persons that have broken the law he has given, and are liable to the curse and condemnation of it; and he is able to save them according to that law, in perfect consistence with it, and with his justice and holiness, since Christ, by whom he saves, was made under it, and has fulfilled it; and that Christ is mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost, is certain from the scripture, and all experience; and God, the lawgiver, is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, for the transgressions of his law; and even Christ the Lamb is also the lion of the tribe of Judah, who will break his enemies in pieces, as a potter's vessel, and punish the contemners of his Gospel with everlasting destruction from his presence and glory: in a word, God, the lawgiver, is sovereign, and can destroy or save whom he pleases; he is able to save the brother that is spoken against and to destroy him that speaks against him.

Who art thou that judgest another? Another man's servant, as in *Romans* xiv. 4. or "thy neighbour," as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or "the neighbour," as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; that is, any brother, friend, or neighbour, in the manner as before observed in the preceding verse.

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

Go to now, ye that say The apostle passes from exposing the sin of detraction, and rash judgment, to inveigh against those of presumption and self-confidence; and the phrase, *Go to now*, is a note of transition, as well as of attention, and contains the form of a solemn and grave address to persons, who either think within themselves, or vocally express the following words, or the like unto them:

To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city To such a country, a place of great trade and merchandise; as Tyre then was in Phoenicia, Thessalonica in Macedonia, Ephesus in Asia, and others: some render this as an imperative, or as

an exhortation, "let us go," which does not alter the sense.

And continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain As is customary for merchants to do; nor does the apostle design by this to condemn merchandise, and the lawful practice of buying and selling, and getting gain; but that men should not resolve upon those things without consulting God, and attending to his will, and subjecting themselves to it; and without considering the uncertainty and frailty of human life; as well as should not promise and assure themselves of success, of getting gain and riches, as if those things were in their own power, and had no dependence upon the providence and blessing of God.

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow Whether there would be a morrow for them or no, whether they should live till to-morrow; and if they should, they knew not what a morrow would bring forth, or what things would happen, which might prevent their intended journey and success: no man can secure a day, an hour, a moment, and much less a year of continuance in this life; nor can he foresee what will befall him to-day or to-morrow; therefore it is great stupidity to determine on this, and the other, without the leave of God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being; and by whose providence all events are governed and directed; see *Prov.* xxvii. 1.

For what is your life? Of what kind and nature is it? what assurance can be had of the continuance of it? by what may it be expressed? or to what may it be compared?

It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away Which rises out of the earth, or water, and expires almost as soon as it exists; at least, continues but a very short time, and is very weak and fleeting, and carried about here and there, and soon returns from whence it came: the allusion is to the breath of man, which is in his nostrils, and who is not to be accounted of, or depended on.

15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

For that ye ought to say Instead of saying we will go to such and such a place, and do this, and that, and the other thing, it should be said,

If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that] The last *and* is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and the passage rendered thus, "If the Lord will, and we shall live, we will do this:" so that here are two conditions of doing any thing; the one is, if it should be agreeable to the determining will and purpose of God, by which every thing in the world comes to pass, and into which the wills of men should be resolved, and resigned; and the other is, if we should live, since life is so very uncertain and precarious: and the sense is, not that this exact form of words should be always used, but what is equivalent to them, or at least, that there should be always a sense of these things upon the mind; and there should be a view to them in all resolutions, designs, and engagements: and since the words are so short and comprehensive, it might be proper for christians to use themselves to such a way of speaking, upon all occasions; we find it used by the apostle Paul, frequently, as in *Acts* xviii. 2. *1 Cor.* iv. 19. *Rom.* i. 10. *Heb.* vi. 3. and even by Jews, Heathens, and Turks. It is a saying of Ben Syra, the Jew (*p*), "Let a man never say he will do any thing, before he says, אם נאמר "if God will." So Cyrus, king of Persia, when, under pretence of hunting, he designed an expedition into Armenia, upon which an hare started, and was caught by an eagle, said to his friends, this will be a good or prosperous hunting to us, *ἢ θεὸς θέλει*, "if God will (*q*). And very remarkable are the words of Socrates to Alcibiades, enquiring of him how he ought to speak; says Socrates, *ἢ θεὸς θέλει*, "if God will (*r*); and says he, in another place (*s*), "but I will do this, and come unto thee to-morrow, "if God will." And it is reported of the Turks (*t*), that they submit every thing to the divine will; as the success of war, or a journey, or any thing, even of the least moment, they desire to be done; and never promise themselves, or others, any thing, but under this condition, *In Shallah*, if God will.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

But now ye rejoice in your boastings] Of to-morrow, and of the continuance of life, and of going to such a place, and abiding there for such a time, and of trading and trafficking with great success, to the obtaining of much gain and riches; see *Prov.* xxvii. 1.

All such rejoicing is evil] Wicked and atheistical,

as expressing a neglect of and independence on providence; arrogating and ascribing too much to themselves, their power and will, as if they had their lives and fortunes in their own hands, and at their own dispose, when all depend upon the will of God. The Syriac version renders it, "all such rejoicing is from evil;" from an evil heart, and from the evil one, Satan.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good] This may regard not only the last particular of referring all things to the will of God, the sovereign disposer of life, and all events, which some might have the knowledge of in theory, though they did not practise according to it; but all the good things the apostle had exhorted to, and the contrary to which he had dehorted from, in this epistle; and suggests, that a Gnostic, or one that knows the will of God, in the several branches of it, revealed in his word,

And doth it not, to him it is sin] It is a greater sin; it is an aggravated one; it is criminal in him that is ignorant of what is good, and does that which is evil, nor shall he escape punishment; but is much more wicked in a man, that knows what is right and good, and ought to be done, and does it not, but that which is evil, and his condemnation will be greater; see *Luke* xii. 47, 48. The omission of a known duty, as well as the commission of a known sin, is criminal.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apostle reproves the vices of rich men, and denounces the judgments of God upon them; exhorts the saints to patience under sufferings; dehorts them from vain and profane swearing, and presses to various duties and branches of religious worship, private and public, and to the performance of several good offices of love to one another. He represents the miseries of wicked rich men as just at hand, *ψ. 1.* because they made no use of their riches, either for themselves or others, and because of the trust they put in them, heaping them up against a time to come, *ψ. 2, 3.* and because of their injustice in detaining the hire of labourers from them, *ψ. 4.* and because of their wantonness and luxury, *ψ. 5.* and because of their cruelty to the innocent, *ψ. 6.* and such who suffer at their hands, are exhorted to exercise patience, from the instance of the husbandman waiting patiently for the fruit of the earth, and the rain to produce it; and

(p) Sentent. 11.

(q) Xenophon, *Cyropæd.* l. 2. c. 25.

(r) Plato in *Alcibiades*, p. 135.

(s) *Ibid.* in *Laches*.

(t) Smith de *Moribus Turc.* p. 74.

and from the consideration of the coming of Christ, the Judge, being near at hand, *ſ. 7—9.* and from the example of the prophets of the Lord, who ſuffered much, and were patient, and ſo happy; and particularly from the inſtance of Job, his patience, the end of the Lord in his afflictions, and his pity and compaſſion towards him, *ſ. 10, 11.* But of all things, the apoſtle intreats them, that they would take care of profane ſwearing, and all vain oaths, ſince theſe bring into condemnation, *ſ. 12.* and from hence he paſſes to various exerciſes of religion; the afflicted he adviſes to prayer; and thoſe in comfortable circumſtances of body and mind, to ſinging of psalms, *ſ. 13.* and ſuch that are ſick, to ſend for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, whereby not only the ſick man would be delivered from his ſickneſs, the Lord raiſing him up, but even his ſins would be declared to be forgiven, *ſ. 14, 15.* And not only it became the elders to pray for ſick perſons, but alſo the ſaints in general, one for another, and to acknowledge their faults to each other, ſince the ſervent prayer of every righteous man is of great avail with God, *ſ. 16.* of which an inſtance is given in Elias, whoſe prayer, though a man ſubject to like paſſions as other men, againſt, and for rain, was very ſucceſſful, *ſ. 17, 18.* And chriſtians ſhould not only be concerned for the health of each other's bodies, but alſo for the good of their ſouls; wherefore, whenever it is obſerved, that any are ſtraying from the path of truth, methods ſhould be taken to reſtore them, and turn them from the error of their ways; and whoever is the happy inſtrument of ſuch a reſtoration, is the means of ſaving a ſoul from death, and hiding a multitude of ſins, *ſ. 19, 20.*

GO to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you.

Go to now, ye rich men] All rich men are not here deſigned; there are ſome rich men, who are good men, and make a good uſe of their riches, and do not abuſe them, as theſe here are repreſented; and yet wicked rich men, or thoſe that were the openly profane, are not here intended neither; for the apoſtle only writes to ſuch who were within the church, and not without, who were profeſſors of religion; and ſuch rich men are addreſſed here, who, notwithſtanding their profeſſion, were not rich towards God, but laid up treaſure for themſelves, and truſted in their riches,

and boated of the multitude of their wealth; and did not truſt in God, and make uſe of their ſubſtance to his glory, and the good of his intereſt, as they ſhould have done.

Weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you] Meaning, not temporal calamities, that ſhould come upon them, at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, in which the rich greatly ſuffered by the robbers among themſelves, as well as by the Roman ſoldiers; for the apoſtle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, and at Jeruſalem; but to the chriſtians of the twelve tribes ſcattered in the ſeveral parts of the world, and who were not diſtreſſed by that calamity; but eternal miſeries, or the torments of hell are intended, which, unleſs they repented of their ſins, would ſhortly, ſuddenly, and unavoidably come upon them, when their preſent joy and laughter would be turned into howling and weeping.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

Your riches are corrupted] Either through diſuſe of them; and ſo the phraſe is expreſſive of their tenaciouſneſs, withholding that from themſelves and others which is meet, and which is keeping riches for the owners thereof, to their hurt; or theſe are corrupted, and are corruptible things, fading and perishing, and will ſtand in no ſtead in the day of wrath, and therefore it is great weakneſs to put any truſt and confidence in them.

And your garments are moth-eaten] Being neither wore by themſelves, nor put upon the backs of others, as they ſhould, but laid up in wardrobes, or in cheſts and coſſers, and ſo became the repaſt of moths, and now good for nothing.

3 Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.

Your gold and ſilver is cankered] Or grown ruſty like iron, by lying long without uſe; this is not eaſily and quickly done, but in length of time gold and ſilver will change and contract a ruſtineſs; and ſo this conveys the ſame idea, of hoarding up riches, and laying up money, without making uſe of it in trade, for the ſupport of the poor, and without diſtributing it to their neceſſities.

And the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you] At the day of judgment; which will be a proof that they have not been employed to ſuch ſervices, and

and for such usefulness, for which they were designed and given.

And shall eat your flesh as it were fire] That is, a remembrance of this, a sense of it impressed upon them, shall be like fire in their bones; shall distress their minds, gnaw their consciences, and be in them the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched.

Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days] Either for many years, as the fool in the Gospel, for the times of old age, the last days of men, for fear they should then want; or for the last days of the world, or of time, as if they thought they should live for ever: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "ye have treasured up wrath for yourselves in the last days;" instead of riches, as they imagined; and that by their covetousness and wickedness, by a wicked disuse of their riches, and an unrighteous detention of them; but this supplement seems to be taken from *Romans* ii. 5. though the sense is confirmed by some copies which connect the phrase, *as it were fire*, in the preceding clause with this, "ye have treasured up as it were fire;" and the Syriac version renders it, "ye have treasured up fire;" the fire of divine wrath; this is the fruit of treasuring up riches in an ill way, and without making a proper use of them.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields] The wages agreed for by the day, with the labourers in their fields, particularly their reapers; which one instance serves for many others; and is the rather mentioned, because reaping is a laborious work, and those who are employed in it, have nothing to live upon, but their hand-labour; and especially because they are made use of in cutting down the corn, when it is fully ripe, and in great plenty; wherefore, to detain their just wages from them, argues great inhumanity and wickedness; and yet this was what was done by rich men.

Which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth] Unto God for vengeance, as the blood of Abel did; and shews that such an evil, however privately and fraudulently it may be done, will be made public, and is a crying one.

And the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth] That is, the

Lord of hosts: of angels, and of men; of the host of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth; of Jews and Gentiles, and of rich and poor; and who has power to vindicate the cause of the latter, against their rich oppressors, and will do it; his ears are open to their cries, he takes notice of them, and regards them, and will take vengeance on those that injure them. The reference is to *Deut.* xxiv. 15.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth] This is said of other rich men; for all that is here said, is not to be understood of the same individuals, but some things of one, and some of another; some made no use of their riches, either for themselves, or others; some did make use of them, and employed the poor, and then would not give them their wages; and others lived a voluptuous and luxurious life, indulged themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and gratified the senses by eating, drinking, gaming, &c. and so were dead whilst they lived. The phrase suggests, that their pleasures were but short-lived, but for a season, even whilst they were on earth; and that hereafter they would not live in pleasure.

And been wanton] Through the abundance and plenty of good things, their delicious way of living, and the swing of pleasures which they took; the allusion is to fatted beasts, which being in good pastures, grow fat and wanton.

Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter] When beasts were slain for some extraordinary entertainment, or for the solemn festivals and sacrifices of the Jews, when they lived more deliciously than at other times; and then the sense is, that these rich men fared sumptuously every day; every day was a festival with them; they indulged themselves in intemperance; they eat and drank, not merely what was necessary, and satisfying, and chearing to nature, but to excess, and gorged, and filled themselves in an extravagant manner: the Syriac version, instead of *hearts*, reads *bodies*; and one copy reads, "your flesh;" and the last phrase may be rendered, as it is in the same version, "as unto, or for the day of slaughter;" and so the Arabic version, "ye have nourished your hearts, as fattened for the day of slaughter;" like beasts that are fattened in order to be killed, so were they preparing and fitting up by their sins for destruction.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

Ye have condemned and killed the just] Meaning not Christ, the just one, as some have thought; whom the Jewish sanhedrim condemned as guilty of death, and got the sentence passed upon him, and him to be crucified by Pontius Pilate, on the day of slaughter, at the time of the passover, as some connect the last clause of the preceding verse with this; since the apostle is not writing to the Jerusalem Jews, nor to unbelievers, but to professors of religion; though he might say, they did it, because their nation did it: but rather this is to be understood of the poor saints, who were just, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly, and were harmless and inoffensive in their conversation; who were evil spoken of, censured, and judged, and condemned in a rash and uncharitable manner by their brethren; or were drawn to the judgment-seats by the rich, who obtained a judicial process against them, and procured a sentence of condemnation to pass upon them unrighteously; and who killed them, by taking away their good names from them, and by withholding from them their supplies of life, the fruit of their own labour, whereby their lives were embittered and made miserable.

And he doth not resist you] It being neither in his power, nor in his inclination; but takes it patiently, quietly submits, and makes no opposition: or God does not resist you, as yet; but he will do it shortly.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be patient therefore, brethren] The apostle here addresses himself to the poor, who were oppressed by the rich men, and these he calls *brethren*, of whom he was not ashamed; when he does not bestow this title upon the rich, though professors of the same religion: these poor brethren he advises to be patient under their sufferings, to bear them with patience,

Unto the coming of the Lord] Not to destroy Jerusalem, but either at death, or at the last judgment; when he will take vengeance on their oppressors, and deliver them from all their troubles, and put them into the possession of that kingdom and glory to which they are called; wherefore, in the mean while, he would have them be quiet and easy, not murmur against God, nor seek to take vengeance on men, but leave it to God, to whom it belongs, who will judge his people.

Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth] Ripe fruit, which arises from the seed he sows in the earth; and which may be called *precious*, because useful both to man and beast; see *Deut. xxxiii. 14—16.* and between this, and the sowing of the seed, is a considerable time, during which the husbandman waits; and this may be an instruction in the present case.

And hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain] The Jews had seldom rains any more than twice a year; the early, or former rain, was quickly after the feast of tabernacles (*u*), in the month Marchesvan, or October, when the seed was sown in the earth; and if it did not rain, they prayed for it, on the third or seventh day of the month (*w*); and the latter rain was in Nisan, or March (*x*), just before harvest; and to this distinction the passage refers.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Be ye also patient] As well as the husbandman, and like him; and wait for the rains and dews of divine grace to fall, and make fruitful, and for the ripe fruit of eternal life; and in the mean while cheerfully and patiently bear all injuries, and oppressions.

Stablish your hearts] Though the state of the saints is stable, they being fixed in the everlasting love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and on the rock of ages; yet their hearts are very unstable, and so are their frames, and the exercise of grace in them, and need stablishing, which is God's work; which is often done by the means of the word and ordinances; and these the saints should make use of, for the stablishing of their hearts: the sense may be, Take heart, be of good cheer, do not be dismayed, or faint, or sink under your pressures, but be of good courage, pluck up your spirits, lift up your heads.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh] When he will render tribulation to them that trouble them, free them from all their sorrows and afflictions, and enter them into the joy of their Lord; which will be either at death, which was not very far off, or at the last day, which was drawing nearer and nearer, and which with God was near; with whom a thousand years, are as one day.

9 Grudge

(*u*) Bartenora in *Misn. Taanith*, c. 1. §. 2. (*w*) T. Bab. *Taanith*, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 1. & 10. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Maimon. *Tephilla*, c. 2. §. 16. (*x*) Targum Jarchi, Kimchi, & Miclol Jophi in Joel ii. 23. Vajikra Rabba, §. 35. fol. 175. 3.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Grudge not one against another, brethren] On account of any happiness, temporal or spiritual, which another enjoys; do not inwardly repine at it; or secretly sigh and groan in an envious manner, at it, though nothing may be said, as the word used signifies; much less complain of, accuse and condemn one another, or meditate and seek revenge.

Lest ye be condemned] Hereafter, at the bar of Christ, by the Judge of the whole earth, who is privy to the secret murmurings and grumbings, and the envious sighs and groans of men; see Matt. vii. 1.

Behold, the judge standeth before the door] There is another that judgeth, who is the Lord, and he is at hand; he is just at the door; a little while and he will come, and not tarry; which may refer not to Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, but to his second coming to judgment, which will be quickly; for the Gospel times are the last times; there will be no other age; at the end of this, Christ will come.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord] Men who have been highly honoured of God, with a gift of prophesying, or foretelling things to come; to whom God revealed his secrets, doing nothing without acquainting them with it; and who were sent forth by him, and prophesied in his name, what were made known unto them; and yet, though these were his favourites, they suffered much; as cruel mockings, scourgings, imprisonment, famine, nakedness, and death in various shapes; some being stoned, others fawn asunder, and others killed by the sword; all which they endured with incredible patience. And therefore the apostle proposes them to be taken,

For an example of suffering affliction, and of patience] Their afflictions were many and great, and yet they were very patient under them; and through faith and patience they went through them, and now inherit the promises; and so are a very proper example and pattern for New Testament saints to follow and copy after.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of

Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Behold, we count them happy which endure] Affliction, with courage, constancy, and patience, and hold out to the end; for such shall be saved; theirs is the kingdom of heaven; they are happy now, and will be so hereafter: the Spirit of God and of glory now rests upon them; and it is an honour done them, that they are counted worthy to suffer for Christ; and they will be glorified with him to all eternity; the consideration of which may serve to encourage and increase patience.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job] From the account which is given of him, and his patience, in the book that bears his name; how he behaved under every trial, which came one upon the back of another; as the plundering of his substance, the loss of his children, and of the health of his body; and yet in all this Job sinned not, nor murmured against God, nor charged him foolishly, and was a mirror of patience; and though he afterwards let fall some expressions of impatience, yet he was humbled for them, and brought to repentance: this shews, that as the apostle James, so the Jews, to whom he writes, believed that there had been really such a man as Job; and that the book which bears his name, is an authentic piece of holy scripture, and contains a narrative of matters of fact; or otherwise this reference to him would have been impertinent. How long Job endured the chastenings of the Lord, cannot be said. The Jews (y) say, they continued on him twelve months, which they gather from Job vii. 3.

And have seen the end of the Lord] That is, the happy end, or exitus, out of all his troubles; which the Lord gave to him, as the oriental versions add; for he gave him twice as much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, Job xlii. 10, 12. Some understand this of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of his great patience in sufferings, in which he is an example to his people, and they would do well to look to, and consider him; and of the end of his sufferings, his glorious resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour; but the former sense is best.

That the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy] As to Job, so to all his people; his paternal relation

(y) Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9.

tion to them engages his pity towards them; nor does he willingly afflict them; and when he does, he sympathises with them; he is afflicted with them, and in his pity redeems them; his bowels move towards them, and he earnestly remembers them, and works deliverance for them, in his own time and way; and therefore it becomes them to be patient.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not] As impatience should not shew itself in secret sighs, groans, murmurings, and repinings, so more especially it should not break forth in rash oaths, or in profane swearing; for of such sort of swearing, and of such oaths, is the apostle to be understood; otherwise an oath is very lawful, when taken in the fear and name of God, and made by the living God, and is used for the confirmation of any thing of moment, and in order to put an end to strife; God himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and angels, and good men, are in scripture sometimes represented as swearing: and that the apostle is so to be understood, appears from the form of swearing prohibited,

Neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath] Of the like kind; such as are forbidden, and cautioned, and reasoned against by our Lord, in *Matt. v. 34—36.* to which the apostle manifestly refers; see the note there.

But let your yea be yea; and your nay nay] That is, whenever there is an occasion for affirming, or denying any thing, let it be done nakedly, simply, and absolutely, without any form of oath annexed to it; for whatever addition of that kind is made, comes from evil, and tends to it, and is evil.

Lest ye fall into condemnation] By the Lord; for either false, or rash, or profane swearing; for he will not suffer it to go unpunished: see *Exodus xx. 7.* Some copies read, “lest ye fall into hypocrisy;” or dissimulation, and get into a habit and custom of lying and deceiving, as common swearers do; and so reads the Arabic version.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Is any among you afflicted?] As the people of God generally are; they are commonly a poor, and an afflicted people; at least there are many among them that are so, and many are their afflic-

tions: those whom Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are not free from sicknesses and diseases; and these are rather signs of love, than arguments against it; and when this is the case of any of the saints, what is to be done?

Let him pray] To God that can save him; in the name of Christ; under the influence of the Spirit; believing in the word of promise. Times of affliction are proper times for prayer; there is then more especially need of it; and God sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon his people, when they have been negligent of their duty, and he has not heard of them for some time, in order to bring them near to him, to seek his face, pay him a visit, and pour out a prayer before him; see *Psalms l. 15.*

Is any merry?] In good heart and spirit, in a good frame of mind, as well as in prosperous circumstances, in soul, body and estate.

Let him sing psalms] Let him not only be inwardly joyful, as he should be in prosperity, and be thankful to God for his many mercies, temporal and spiritual, he enjoys; but let him express it vocally, and melodiously, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: not that these are the only persons that are to sing psalms, or this the only time, any more than that afflicted persons are the only ones that are to pray, or the time of affliction the only time of prayer; but as affliction more especially calls for prayer, so spiritual joy, and rejoicing in prosperous seasons, for singing of psalms: weeping, and singing of psalms, were thought, by the Jews, inconsistent. Kimchi, on the title of the third psalm, observes, that their Rabbins say, That when David went up the ascent of the mount of Olives, he wept; and if he wept, why is this called a psalm? and if a psalm, למה בכה “why did he weep?”

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Is any sick among you?] Which is often the case; the bodies of the saints, as well as others, are liable to a variety of diseases; they are sick, and sometimes nigh unto death, as Epaphroditus was: and then,

Let him call for the elders of the church] In allusion to the elders of the congregation of Israel, *Lev. iv. 15.* By these may be meant, either the elder members of the church, men of gravity and soundness in the faith, persons of long standing and experience; who have the gift and grace of prayer, and are not only capable of performing that

that duty, but of giving a word of counsel and advice to the sick. It was a kind of proverbial saying of Aristophanes the Grammarian; "The works of young men, the counsels of middle aged persons, and *εὐχαι γεραιῶν*, "the prayers of ancient men (x):" or rather officers of churches are meant, particularly pastors, who are so called in scripture; these should be sent for in times of sickness, as well as physicians; and rather than they, since their prayers may be the means of healing both soul and body: so in former times, the prophets of God were sent to in times of sickness, for advice and assistance. It is a saying of R. Phinehas ben Chama (a), that "Whoever has a sick person in his house, let him go to a wife man, and he will seek mercy for him." And it follows here,

And let them pray over him] Or for him, for the recovery of his health.

Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord] Which some think was only done in a common, medicinal way, oil being used much in the eastern countries for most disorders; and so these elders used an ordinary medicine, as well as prayer: or rather this refers to an extraordinary gift, which some elders had of healing diseases, as sometimes by touching, and by laying on of hands, or by expressing some words, and so by anointing with oil; see *Mark* vi. 13. which extraordinary gifts being now ceased, the rite or ceremony of anointing with oil, ceases in course: however, this passage gives no countenance to the extreme unction of the Papists; that of theirs being attended with many customs and ceremonies which are not here made mention of; that being used, as is pretended, for the healing of the souls of men, whereas this was used for corporal healing; that is only performed when life is despaired of, and persons are just going out of the world; whereas this was made use of to restore men to health, and that they might continue longer in it, as follows.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick] That is, the prayer of the elders, being put up in faith by them, and in which the sick person joins by faith; such a prayer is a means of bringing down from God a blessing on the sick man, and of restoring him to his former health.

And the Lord shall raise him up] From his bed of sickness, on which he is laid, and bring him forth to praise his name, and to fear and glorify him.

And if he have committed sins] Not that it is a question whether he has or no, for no man lives without sin, nor the commission of it; but the sense is, if he has been guilty of any sins, which God in particular has taken notice of, and on account of which he has laid his chastising hand upon him, in order to bring him to a sense of them, and to acknowledge them; which is sometimes the case, though not always, at the same time that his bodily health is restored.

They shall be forgiven him] He shall have a discovery, and an application of pardoning grace to him: and indeed the removing the sickness or disease, may be called the forgiveness of his sins, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase in scripture, as in *1 Kings* viii. 34, 36, 50.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Confess your faults one to another] Which must be understood of sins committed against one another; which should be acknowledged, and repentance for them declared, in order to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation; and this is necessary at all times, and especially on beds of affliction, and when death and eternity seem near approaching: wherefore this makes nothing for auricular confession, used by the Papists; which is of all sins, whereas this is only of such by which men offend one another; that is made to priests, but this is made by the saints to one another, by the offending party to him that is offended, for reconciliation, whereby a good end is answered; whereas there is none by the other, and very often bad consequences follow.

And pray one for another, that ye may be healed] Both corporally and spiritually.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much] Not any man's prayer; not the prayer of a profane sinner, for God heareth not sinners; nor of hypocrites and formal professors; but of the righteous man, who is justified by the righteousness of Christ, and has the truth of grace in him, and lives soberly and righteously; for a righteous man often designs a good man, a gracious man, one that is sincere and upright, as Job, Joseph of Arimathea, and others; though not without sin, as the person instanced in the following verse shews; Elias, who was a man of like passions,

D d 2 but

(x) Apud Harpocratian. Lex. p. 125.

(a) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 116. 1.

but a just man, and his prayer was prevalent: and not any prayer of a righteous man is of avail, but that which is *effectual, fervent*; that has power, and energy, and life in it; which is with the spirit, and with the understanding, with the heart, even with a true heart, and in faith; and which is put up with fervency, and not in a cold, lukewarm, lifeless, formal and customary way: it is but one word in the original text; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it *daily*; that prayer which is constant and continual, and without ceasing, and is importunate; this prevails and succeeds, as the parable of the widow, and the unjust judge shews. Some translate the word *inspired*; the Spirit of God breathes into men the breath of spiritual life, and they live, and being quickened by him, they breathe; and prayer is the breath of the spiritual man, and is no other than the reverberation of the Spirit of God in him; and such prayer cannot fail of success: it may be rendered *inwrought*; true prayer is not what is written in a book, but what is wrought in the heart, by the Spirit of God; who is the enditer of prayer, who impresses the minds of his people with a sense of their wants, and fills their mouths with arguments, and puts strength into them to plead with God; and makes intercession for them according to the will of God; and such prayer is always heard, and regarded by him: this has great power with God, whatever is asked, believing, is received; God can deny nothing prayed for in this manner; it has great power with Christ, as Jacob had over the angel, when he wrestled with him; and as the woman of Canaan, when she importuned him, on account of her daughter, and would have no denial: such prayer has often been of much avail against Satan, who has been dispossessed by it; even the most stubborn kind of devils have been dislodged by fasting and prayer: it has often been the means of preserving kingdoms and nations, when invaded by enemies, as the instances of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah shew; and of removing judgments from a people, as was often done, through the prayers of Moses, as when fire, and fiery serpents were sent among them; and of bringing down blessings, as rain from heaven by Elijah; and of delivering particular persons from trouble, as Peter was delivered from prison, through the incessant prayer of the church for him: and this power, and efficacy, and prevalence of prayer, does not arise from any intrinsic worth and merit in it, but from the grace of the Spirit, who influences, and endites it, directs to it, and assists in it; and from the powerful mediation, precious blood, and efficacious sacrifice of Christ; and from the promise of God and Christ, who have engaged, that

whatever is asked according to the will of God, and in the name of Christ, shall be done. The Jews have had formerly a great notion of prayer: the power of prayer, they say (*b*), is strong; and extol it above all other services: they say (*c*), "It is better than good works, or than offerings and sacrifices; and particularly, the prayer of righteous men (*d*)."

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

[*Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are*] The apostle gives an instance of earnest and fervent prayer, and of the efficacy of it, in Elias; who is the same with the prophet Elijah, or Elijah the Tishbite; who, by the Septuagint in *Mal. iv. 5.* is called Elias, as here, and elsewhere, in the New Testament: of him James says, that he was a *man*, contrary to the notion of some of the Jewish writers, who affirm, that Elijah was not born of a father and mother, but was an angel, who was clothed with the four elements of the world (*e*); but he was not only born, but born in sin, as others are, and was by nature no better than others; and he himself confesses, that he was no better than his fathers, *1 Kings xix. 4.* And the apostle further observes, concerning him, that he *was subject to like passions as we are*; both in body and soul; he was subject to hunger and weariness, and was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Sarepta, and by an angel; and he was subject to reproach, affliction, and persecution, being charged by Ahab, as a troubler of Israel, and persecuted by Jezebel, who sought his life: he was a mortal man, and liable to death, and requested to die, and must have died, had it not been for the wonderful power of God, which translated him, that he should not see death; and he was not free from sinful passions, as impatience, fear, and unbelief, *1 Kings xvii. 20.* and chapter *xix. 3, 4, 10, 18.*

[*And he prayed earnestly*] Or *prayed in prayer*; an Hebraism: it is said (*f*) of one, "that, *וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל*," "he prayed his prayer;" and of others, that, *וַיִּתְפַּלְּלוּ* "they prayed prayers;" though the phrase here seems to design something more than bare praying; a praying, not merely externally, or formally, and with the lip only, but with the spirit,

(b) Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

fol. 32. 2.

fol. 64. 1.

in ibid.

(c) T. Bab. Beracot,

fol. 14. 1. & Yebamot,

fol. 37. 1. & Imre Binah

(f) Ibid. in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & in Num. fol. 79. 2.

spirit, and with the understanding, and with the heart engaged in it, with inwrought prayer. The prophet prayed with much earnestness, with great vehemence and intenseness of spirit, as this Hebrewism denotes; his prayer was fervent, and it was constant, and importunate, and was continued till he had an answer: he may be thought to have prayed each of the seven times, he sent his servant to look out for a sign of rain, 1 Kings xviii. 43. he first prayed,

That it might not rain] This is not recorded in express words, but may be gathered from 1 Kings xviii. 1. where he says, *As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew, nor rain, these years but according to my word*; so the passage is understood by the Jewish interpreters: the phrase, *before whom I stand*, is paraphrased by one of them (g) thus; before whom I am used to stand, בחיילי "in prayer;" and it is a common saying with the Jews, there is no standing ever mentioned, but prayer is intended; see the note on Matt. vi. 5. And the other phrase, *according to my word*, is, by another (b), interpreted to this sense, that the rain should not descend naturally, according to the custom of the world, but it should descend when Elijah, עליהו, "prayed for it;" and so it was.

And it rained not on the earth] On the land of Israel, which is only meant; it rained in other parts of the world, for the drought in those times was not universal: and this was,

By the space of three years and six months] Which exactly agrees with the words of Christ, Luke iv. 25. and this was in judgment upon the land of Israel, for the idolatry it was filled with in the times of Ahab; and this instance of prayer is mentioned, not with a view that it should be imitated; for we are not to pray for judgments, unless we have a divine order for it, as Elijah had; but to shew the efficacy of prayer made according to the will of God.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

And he prayed again] 1 Kings xviii. 42, 43. Here also is no express mention of his prayer, but it may be concluded from his gestures; and so the Jewish interpreters understand these words, "Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, להחמל to pray, and he cast himself down upon the earth, על השמים להחמל to pray for rain; and he put his face between his knees, והחמל and prayed, and said to his servant, Go up now,

"look toward the sea;" and this he said while he was בחיילי "in his prayer (i):" and the effect of this his prayer was,

And the heaven gave rain] See 1 Kings xviii. 45.

And the earth brought forth her fruit] Which for the years past it had not; hence there was a sore famine in the land, 1 Kings xviii. 2. Now the apostle chose to instance in such a case, because it was a common thing for the Jews to ask for rain: we often read of such a doctor, that he prayed for rain, and it came; and of another, that he asked for the rains, and they descended (k): and this view is to observe, that the weakness and infirmities of the saints ought not to discourage them from prayer; and that they should be earnest and fervent in it, as was Elias, a man of like passions with themselves.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth] Either from Christ, who is the truth, by departing from him, forsaking his ways, worship, and ordinances; or from the scriptures of truth, not speaking according to them, and embracing notions that are contrary unto them; or from the Gospel, the word of truth, from the doctrine of faith, and from uprightness of life and conversation, after having made a profession of christianity; for this is to be understood of one who has embraced the christian religion, become a member of a church, and has walked in the path of truth and holiness, but now fallen into error, either in principle, or in practice, or both.

And one convert him] Or turn him from his error, to truth again; for this designs not first conversion, or the turning of a sinner from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and from the evil of a man's heart and ways, and from a dependence on his own righteousness to the Lord Jesus Christ, to look to him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which is wholly and entirely God's work, and not man's; but conversion after backslidings; for a restoration from a fallen condition is sometimes so called, Psalm li. 12, 13. Luke xxii. 32. and which one brother may be an instrument of to another, by shewing him, and setting before him the evil of his errors, whether in principle or practice; and by instructing him in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the duties of religion; and by reproving him in meekness, and according to the rules of Christ; which means

(i) Jarchi, Kimchi, Ralbag. & Laniado in loc. (k) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Taanith, fol. 19. 1. 23. 1. 24. 2. 25. 2. & Yoma, fol. 53. 2.

(g) R. David Kimchi in loc. (b) Vid. Laniado in loc.

means are sometimes blessed for the gaining of such; and which may be called conversion: and also, this is sometimes done by praying for him; and which seems chiefly to be intended here; for from praying for the healing of the diseases of the body, the apostle proceeds to encourage the saints to pray for one another, for the healing of the diseases of the mind; and suggests, that if prayer avails to the one, it may to the other; and which is the most desirable, and the greatest blessing, as follows.

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Let him know] And observe it for his encouragement.

That he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way] Who is the instrument of restoring a backsliding professor, for such an one is meant by a sinner, and not a profane person; or of turning a poor bewildered believer, who is got out of the way of truth and holiness, into the right way again; or of convincing him of the error of his way, whether it be in point of doctrine, or of duty; and so of bringing him to the fold of Christ again, from whence he has strayed.

Shall save a soul from death] Not efficiently, but instrumentally, as in 1 Tim. iv. 16. for otherwise Christ is the only Saviour; and he will be the means of saving a soul, which is of more worth than a world; and that from death, the second death, which lies in the separation of the soul

from God, and in a sense of his wrath; which apostasy threatens with, and leads unto, if grace prevents not. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "his soul;" but the common reading is more emphatical; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "his own soul;" and the Ethiopic version, "himself," as respecting him that is the instrument of the conversion of the other, and not the person converted.

And shall hide a multitude of sins] Either his own, as the same versions read; and then the sense is, he shall be blessed with a discovery and application of the forgiveness of all his sins, though they have been many and great; or rather the sins of the person converted. Sin is only covered by the blood and righteousness of Christ; and thereby it is so covered, as not to be seen by the eye of vindictive justice, and in such manner, as that the persons of those who are covered therewith, are all fair, without fault, and unproveable in the sight of God; and though their sins are many, even a multitude, they are blotted out as a thick cloud, and are abundantly pardoned; yea, all their sins are covered, be they ever so many, for God forgives all trespasses, for Christ's sake; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and his righteousness justifies from all: and whoever is an instrument of bringing a backslider to a sense of the evil of his ways, and to true repentance for the same; as he, upon such repentance, has his iniquities caused to pass from him, or, in other words, to be covered, as from the sight of God, so from his own; he may be said to be the instrument of this also.

The First Epistle General of P E T E R.

THAT Simon, called Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was the writer of this epistle, is not questioned by any; nor was the genuineness and authenticity of it ever made a doubt of. Eusebius says (a), that it had been confessed by all, and received without controversy; and that the ancients, without any scruple, had made use of it in their writings. It is called his *general* or *catholic* epistle, because it was not written to any particular person, or to any particular church, but in general, to a number of christians dispersed in several places. The time when this epistle was written, is not certain; some place it in the year of Christ forty-four or forty-five, and so make it to be the most ancient of all the epistles, and which is the more commonly received opinion; but Dr Lightfoot (b) places it in the year sixty-five, because in it the apostle speaks of the end of all things being at hand, and of the fiery trial just coming on them, and of judgment beginning at the house of God, chapter iv. 7, 12, 17. all which he applies to the destruction of Jerusalem; though others fix it to sixty-one, in the seventh year of Nero (c). The place from whence it seems to be written was Babylon, chap. v. 13. which is to be understood not figuratively, either of Rome or Jerusalem, but properly of Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, or Assyria. The persons to whom it is written were Jews, at least chiefly; for there might be some Gentiles among them, who may be taken notice of in some parts of the epistle; but the principal part were Jews, as appears from their being called "the strangers of the dispersion," or, as James calls them, *the twelve tribes scattered abroad*; from the mention of the tradition of their fathers; from their having their conversation honest among the Gentiles, and their past life among them; from urging subjection to the civil magistrates among the heathens, and the right use of their christian liberty as to the ceremonies of the law; and from the near destruction of Jerusalem, which could only affect them; and from the use made of the writings of the Old Testament, and the authority of the prophets; see chapters i. 1, 18. and ii. 12. and iv. 3. and ii. 13, 16. and iv. 7, 12, 17. as well as from the second epistle, which was written to the same; see chapters i. 19. and ii. 1. and iii. 1, 2, 15. in which he seems to refer to the epistle to the Hebrews, written by Paul, as to these. And besides, Peter was the minister of the circumcision, or of the circumcised Jews, as Paul was of the Gentiles; and even those passages in this epistle which seem most likely to concern the Gentiles, may be understood of the Jews, as, which speak of their ignorance, idolatry, and having not been a people, chapters i. 14. and iv. 3. and ii. 10. which were true of them before conversion, and as living among Gentiles. The occasion of writing it was this; Peter meeting with Sylvanus, a faithful brother, and who had been a companion of the apostle Paul, he takes this opportunity of sending a letter by him to the converted Jews, dispersed among the Gentile countries, where he, with Paul, and others, travelled: the design of which is to testify of the true doctrine of grace, in which they were agreed; see chap. v. 12. And accordingly in it he does treat of the doctrine of electing grace, of redeeming grace, of regenerating and sanctifying grace, and of persevering grace; and exhorts believers to the exercise of grace, of faith, hope, and love; and to the discharge of such duties becoming their several stations, whereby they might evidence to others the truth of grace in themselves, and adorn the doctrine of the grace of God, and recommend it to others: and particularly he exhorts them patiently to bear all afflictions and persecutions they should meet with, for their profession of the true grace of God, in which he encourages them to stand steadfast: and this is the general scope and design of the epistle.

CHAP.

(a) Eocl. Hist. l. 3. c. 3.

(b) Harmony, &c. Vol. I. p. 335.

(c) Fabricii Bibliothec. Græc. l. 4. c. 5. §. 10. p. 164.

C H A P. I.

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle gives thanks to God for various blessings of grace bestowed, or to be bestowed upon the persons he writes to; and then, with the best of arguments and motives, urges them to the performance of several duties of religion. In the inscription, the person who is the writer of the epistle is described, both by his name, and by his office; and also the persons to whom it is sent, by their outward condition, *strangers*, dispersed through several countries, particularly mentioned; and by their spiritual estate, *elect men*; the source and spring of which election is, the foreknowledge of God the Father; the means, the sanctification of the Spirit; and the end obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ; and to these the apostle wishes a multiplication of grace and peace, *ψ. 1, 2.* and then he gives thanks to God for the regeneration of them; the efficient cause of which is, God the Father; the moving cause, his abundant mercy; the means, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; the end, a lively hope of a glorious inheritance, *ψ. 3, 4.* and next follows a description of regenerate ones; they are such who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; who rejoice in hope of that salvation, though now for a little while are sorrowful, by reason of afflictions, which are for the trial of their faith; they are believers in Christ, lovers of him, and rejoice in him, and shall at last receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, *ψ. 5—9.* the excellency of which salvation is set forth from the concern the prophets had in it, the scrutiny they made into it, and the revelation of it made to them; from the concern the apostles had in it, and their report of it, and from the desire of angels to look into it, *ψ. 10—12.* upon which the apostle exhorts to the exercise of various graces and duties, to attention of mind, to sobriety, to a constant hope of eternal glory, and to holiness of life and conversation, *ψ. 13, 14.* the arguments engaging to which, are taken from the nature of God, who had called them by his grace, *ψ. 15, 16.* from their concern with him, as a Father, and a Judge; from their state and condition, as sojourners in this world, and from their redemption by the blood of Christ from a vain conversation, *ψ. 17—19.* and of Christ the redeemer of them, many things are said; as that he was ordained before the foundation of the world, to be the redeemer; was manifested in human nature in these last

days, for the sake of such that believe; was raised from the dead, and glorified, that there might be a sufficient foundation for the exercise of faith and hope in God, *ψ. 20, 21.* and next, the apostle exhorts to brotherly love, in purity, and with fervency; from the consideration of the internal purification of them by the Spirit, through obedience to the truth; and from their regeneration, the cause of which was not corruptible, but incorruptible seed; and the means, the living and abiding word of God, *ψ. 22, 23.* which is illustrated by a passage out of *Isaiah xl. 6—8.* setting forth the frailty and mortality of men, and the transitoriness of all outward enjoyments; to which is opposed, the duration of the everlasting Gospel, the means of regeneration, *ψ. 24, 25.*

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ] The writer of this epistle describes himself first by his name, *Peter*, the same with *Cephas*, which signifies a rock, or stone; a name given him by Christ at his first conversion, and which respected his after firmness, solidity, resolution, and constancy; for his former name was Simeon, or Simon, as sometimes called; see *Matt. iv. 18. John i. 42.* and he further describes himself by his office, as *an apostle of Jesus Christ*; being one of the twelve apostles, and the first of that number; who saw Christ in the flesh, was conversant with him, had his call and commission immediately from him, and was qualified by him to preach the Gospel; and was sent out first into Judea, and then into all the world, to publish it, with a power of working miracles to confirm it; and this his character he makes mention of, in order to give the greater weight and authority to his epistle; and it is to be observed, that he does not stile himself, as his pretended successor does, the Head of the church, and Christ's Vicar on earth; nor does he call himself the Prince of the apostles, but only an apostle, as he was upon an equal foot with the rest. The persons,

To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia] These Jews here intended, are called *strangers*; not in a metaphorical sense, either because they were, as the wicked are, estranged from the womb, and alienated from the life of God, as all unconverted men are, and as they were before conversion; for now they were no more strangers, in this sense: or because of their unsettled state and condition in this

this life; having no continuing city, and seeking one to come, an heavenly country; and living as pilgrims and strangers, in which respect they are indeed so styled, chapter ii. 11. but in a civil sense, and not as the Gentiles were, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, for these were Jews; but on account of their not being in their own land, and in a foreign country, and therefore said to be *scattered*, or the *strangers of the dispersion*; either on account of the persecution at the death of Stephen, when multitudes of the converted Jews were scattered abroad, not only throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, but as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch; see *Acts* viii. 1, 4. and chap. xi. 19. and so it may be afterwards, throughout the places here mentioned; or else these were some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by Salmanasser, and of the two tribes, by Nebuchadnezzar; or rather, the dispersion of the Greeks, mentioned in *John* vii. 35. under the Macedonians, by Ptolomy Lagus: however, there were Jews of Pontus, who inhabited that place, and of such we read in *Acts* ii. 9. who came to worship, at the feast of Pentecost, some of which were converted to the christian faith, and being mentioned first, has occasioned this epistle to be called, both by Tertullian (*a*), and Cyprian (*b*), "the epistle to the Pontians." Perhaps these Jews, converted on the day of Pentecost, on their return hither, laid the first foundation of a Gospel-church-state in this country: it is a tradition of the ancients, mentioned by Eusebius (*c*), that Peter himself preached here, and so, very likely, formed the christians he found, and those that were converted by him, into Gospel-churches; and it appears by a letter of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth (*d*), that there were churches in Pontus in the second century, and so there were in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth, and bishops over them (*e*), *Galatia*, next mentioned, is that part of the lesser Asia, called *Galla Græcia*, in which were several churches, to whom the apostle Paul wrote his epistle, called *The epistle to the Galatians*; see the notes on *Acts* xvi. 6. and on *Gal.* i. 2. *Cappadocia*, according to Ptolemy (*f*), was bounded on the west by Galatia, on the south by Cilicia, on the east by Armenia the great, on the north by part of the Euxine Pontus; it had many famous cities in it, as Solinus (*g*) says; as Archelais, Neocæsarea, Melita, and Mazaca.

The Jews oftentimes talk (*b*) of going from Cappadocia to Lud, or Lydda; so that, according to them, it seems to be near to that place, or at least, that there was a place near Lydda, so called; of this see more in the note on *Acts* ii. 9. From this country also there were Jews at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, some of whom were converted; and here likewise the apostle Peter is said to preach, as before observed of Pontus; and who probably founded a church or churches here, in the first century; and in the second century, according to Tertullian (*i*), there were believers in Christ dwelling in this country; and so there were churches and bishops over them in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries; and even in the ninth century, there were christians in these parts (*k*). *Asia*, here intends neither the lesser nor the greater Asia, but Asia properly so called; and which, according to Solinus (*l*), Lycia and Phrygia bounded on the east, the Ægean shores on the west, the Egyptian sea on the south, and Paphlagonia on the north; the chief city in it was Ephesus; and so it is distinguished from Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia, in *Acts* xvi. 6, 7, as here from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, and from Pontus, and Cappadocia, in *Acts* ii. 9. though they were all in the lesser Asia. Here also were Jews converted on the day of Pentecost; and here likewise Peter is said to preach: and by him, and by the apostle John, who also lived and died in this country, churches were planted; and churches there were here, even in the seventh century, as distinct from the other Asia greater or less; for out of it bishops were sent to, and were present at, the sixth council at Constantinople, whose names are recorded; yea, in the eighth century, there were churches and bishops, one of which persuaded Leo to remove images from places of worship; and another was in the Nicene synod (*m*). The last place mentioned is Bithynia, of which, see the note on *Acts* xvi. 7. And though the apostle Paul, and his companions, were not suffered at a certain time to go into Bithynia, and preach the Gospel there, yet it is certain that it was afterwards carried thither; and as Peter is said to preach in Pontus, Asia, and Cappadocia, so likewise in Bithynia; here, according to the Roman martyrology, Luke the evangelist died; and

(a) Scorpiace, c. 12. (b) Testimon. ad Quirina. l. 3. c. 36. 37. 39. (c) Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 1. (d) Apud Euseb. lib. 1. 4. c. 23. (e) Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 289. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. (f) Geograph. l. 5. c. 6. (g) Polyhist. c. 57. Vol. V.

(b) Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & in Exod. fol. 33. 2. & 35. 4. (i) Adv. Judæos, c. 7. ad Scapulam, c. 3. (k) Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. c. 3. p. 11. c. 7. p. 127. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 4. c. 9. p. 350, 390. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 605. 606. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3. (l) C. 53. (m) Ibid cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. E e

and according to tradition, Prochorus, one of the seven deacons, in *Acts* vi. 5. was bishop of Nicomedia, in this country; and *Tychicus*, of whom the apostle Paul makes frequent mention, was bishop of Chalcedon, another city in it; and who are both said to be of the seventy disciples; see the note on *Luke* x. 1. and it is certain, from the testimony of Pliny (*n*), an heathen writer, in a letter of his to Trajan the Emperor, written about the year 104, that there were then great numbers of christians in Bithynia; not only the cities, but the towns and villages were full of them; and so in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, there were churches, and bishops over them (*o*); and even in the ninth century, there were some that bore the christian name in Bithynia (*p*). In these places however, it seems, dwelt many Jews who were converted to Christ, to whom the apostle inscribes this epistle, and whom he further describes in the following verse.

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

[*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*] Not to any office, as to that of bishops or presbyters; for though the apostle writes to some of them under this character, chap. v. 1. yet not to all; nor were they so called as a nation, for they were persons scattered about in several countries; nor as a church, for they are not wrote to as such; nor does this character merely denote their effectual vocation; though as that is a fruit and evidence of election, it is sometimes so stiled, and the saints called by grace are said to be *chosen*; see *John* xv. 19. *1 Cor.* i. 26. but it intends the eternal election of those persons both to grace and glory; which the apostle knew of, not by divine revelation, or any particular discovery made to him; but he concluded it in a judgment of charity, they being all under a profession of faith in Christ, and he having reason to believe that the greater part of them were truly partakers of that faith which demonstrated them to be the elect of God: the cause, spring, and source of their election was, *the foreknowledge of God the Father*; to whom election is commonly ascribed, agreeable

to the order of the divine persons in the Trinity, and their distinct parts in the economy of salvation, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit: and by this his *foreknowledge* is meant, not his eternal, universal, and infallible knowledge, and which is infinite, and reaches to all things and persons, present, future, or possible; for this has for its objects persons whom God never predestinated and chose; though certain it is that he knows and foreknows all whom he does predestinate and choose, nor does it intend the mere decree of election, or God's eternal purpose and resolution to choose, but the spring and source of that act of his; and much less does it mean a bare prescience of men, and choice of them, upon a foresight of faith, holiness, good works, and perseverance therein; for these are all, when genuine, the fruits and effects of election, which are included in it, and secured and brought about by it; but the sovereign grace, good-will, and pleasure of God, or the everlasting love of God the Father, which is the cause of, and has given birth to the act of election, is meant by foreknowledge, joined with affection, delight, and approbation; knowledge, and foreknowledge, as ascribed to the divine being, often signify such things; see *Psalms* i. 6. *2 Tim.* ii. 19. *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. and chap. xi. 1, 2. and such a knowledge God the Father had of the persons of the elect from all eternity; and which is the ground and foundation of his choosing them to grace and glory, and not any thing in them, or done by them, or any thing out of himself; no other reason can be given of it, than his own grace, his pure love, and sovereign good-will and pleasure: the means follow, through which they were chosen,

[*Through sanctification of the Spirit*] As in *2 Thess.* ii. 13. see the note there. The ends to which the saints are chosen, are,

[*Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*] By *obedience* is meant, either the obedience of elect men to Christ, which lies in obeying the truth of the Gospel, called the obedience of faith; and so is the same with the *belief of the truth*, which goes along in election with the sanctification of the Spirit, in *2 Thess.* ii. 13. and in submission to Gospel ordinances, and doing all good works in the name, faith, and strength of Christ; and which also are fruits and effects, and so not causes of divine predestination; see *Eph.* ii. 10. and also follow upon the sanctification of the Spirit: or else the obedience of Christ is intended; and so the Arabic version renders it, "unto the obedience of Jesus Christ;" which lay in his performing the precepts of the law, and bearing

(*n*) Epist. l. 10. ep. 97.

(*o*) Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6.

(*p*) Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 9. p. 390. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 601, 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3.

bearing the penalty of it, death; and by which the chosen seed are justified, or made righteous in the sight of God, and have a title to eternal life and glory, and are safe from wrath to come; and to the enjoyment of this grace, they are chosen of God the Father; and between these two, predestination and justification, there is a close and inseparable connection; so that they that are interested in the one, are in the other; see *Romans* viii. 30. the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, does not denote a small quantity of it, for it was shed and poured out in great abundance; but is said in allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the passover-lamb, *Exod.* xii. 22, 23. or to the sprinkling of the blood on the book of the covenant, and on the people at mount Sinai, *Exodus* xxiv. 8. or to other sprinklings of blood in their legal sacrifices: the application of the blood of Christ to the heart, by the Spirit of God, for cleansing, pardon, and justification, is meant; which affords true, solid conscience-peace and joy now, and entitles to eternal happiness and glory; all which are secured by electing grace. The salutation of these persons follows.

Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied] Which is much the same that is used by the apostle Paul in all his epistles; see the note on *Romans* i. 7. only Peter adds the word *multiplied*; which makes it more express, and the sense more clear: he means an enlarged view of interest in the love of God, an increase of grace out of the fulness of it in Christ, and of Gospel light, and of the several gifts of the Spirit; and also of all prosperity outward and inward, of a conscience-peace through the blood of Christ, which passeth all understanding, and a more established and well-grounded hope of enjoying eternal peace hereafter. The phrase is Jewish, and is used in their salutations in this form, שלמכון ימי "let your peace be multiplied."

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] The epistle begins here with thanksgiving to God, or an ascription of blessing, praise, and glory to him; for this does not mean an invoking or conferring a blessing on him; neither of which can be, for there is not a greater than he to be

invoked, nor can any thing be added to his blessedness: but God may be blessed by his creatures when they speak well of him, and his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; when they ascribe all their mercies, spiritual and temporal to him; give him the glory of them, and express their thanks for them in heart, lip, and life; and such a blessing of God for a special and spiritual favour, the grace of regeneration is intended here: by *God* is meant, not God essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as is clearly expressed: the words are rendered in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, without the copulative *and*, thus, "blessed be God the Father;" and if that is retained, they may be rendered thus, "blessed be God, even the Father;" as in *2 Cor.* i. 3. and so the latter be exegetical of the former; though both are true of Christ, in different senses; God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; and he is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for as man, he had no father, nor is he a son by office, but by nature; see the note on *Eph.* i. 3.

Which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again] Regeneration is the blessing thanks are given for; and if we are to be thankful to God, and bless his name, because he hath made us creatures, and hath given us a natural being; much more should we praise him for making us new creatures, and giving us a spiritual being. To be *begotten again*, and so to be *born again*, is opposed unto, and distinguished from our first birth, when we were conceived, and shapen in sin; and designs a birth, spiritual, holy, and heavenly it is signified by a being quickened, or made alive; so as in a spiritual sense to see, and hear, and breathe after divine things, and to live a life of faith and holiness; by Christ being formed in the heart; by a partaking of the divine nature, and by being made new men, or new creatures: God, and not man, is the efficient cause of this; which is sometimes ascribed to the Spirit, and sometimes to the Son, and here to the Father; and it is not mens work, but his own good-will and pleasure, his great love and free favour, his rich grace and abundant mercy, are the impulsive, or moving cause of it; and abundance of grace and mercy indeed, is displayed in the regeneration and conversion of sinners: what they are regenerated to is,

Unto a lively hope] Meaning either the grace of hope, which is implanted in regeneration, and not before; for then, and then only, is a good hope through grace given: and it may be said to be *lively*, or *living*, inasmuch as it is fixed, not on dead works, but on a living Christ, on his person,

(9) T. Hieros. Maafer Sheni, fol. 56, 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 11. 2.

person, blood, and righteousness; and is not the hope of a dead sinner, of a lifeless hypocrite, and formal professor, that has a name to live, and is dead, but of a living believer, one made truly alive by the Spirit of life, from Christ; and is, what is sometimes, at least, in lively exercise, and makes the heart of a believer chearful, brisk, and lively; and is what is lasting and durable, and will never be lost, but will be held fast unto the end: or else the thing hoped for, is intended, the hope laid up in heaven; the blessed hope regenerate ones are born unto, and are looking for, even eternal life and happiness; and the Syriac version renders it, "unto hope of life;" that is, of eternal life; and so reads one of Stephens's copies. Saints are both begotten again to the grace of hope, and to the glory which that grace is waiting for: the means is,

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead] Which may be connected either with the act of begetting again; for Christ's resurrection is the virtual cause of regeneration, or regeneration is in virtue of Christ's resurrection; had he not risen from the dead, none would have been quickened, or made to live, or have been raised to newness of life: his resurrection is the exemplar of regeneration; there is a likeness between them; as his resurrection was a declaration of his sonship, so regeneration is a manifestation of adoption; and as Christ's resurrection was his first step to glory, so is regeneration to eternal life; and both are wrought by the same almighty power: or the clause may be connected with the foregoing, *unto a lively hope*; for the resurrection of Christ is what is the means of, and lays a solid foundation of hope, both of the saints resurrection from the dead, of which Christ is the meritorious cause, pledge, and pattern, and of eternal glory and happiness, since he rose for our justification, with which glorification is inseparably connected.

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

To an inheritance incorruptible] This is a further explanation of the *lively hope*, or hope laid up in heaven, which regenerate ones are begotten to: it is an *inheritance*; a large estate and rich possession, they are born heirs apparent to; what is not to be got by industry, or obtained by the works of the law; for they that are of the law are not heirs; but what is the pure bequest and free gift of God, as a father to his children; for an inheritance is proper and peculiar to children, nor does it belong to any but them; and it comes to

them through the death of the testator, Christ, and of it the holy spirit is the pledge and earnest: and here it is said to be *incorruptible*; it is free from corruption in itself; nor can it be corrupted by others, by moth, or rust, or other things, as gold, silver, and garments may, which are a part of earthly inheritances; nor can it be enjoyed by corrupt persons, either corrupted with sin, or clothed with frailty and mortality; wherefore, in order to inherit it, corruption must put on incorruption, in every sense; other epithets and commendations of it follow.

And undefiled] It is in its own nature pure and holy, and free from any defilement of sin; nor are there any of those impurities in it which Jews and Mahometans dream of in their vainly expected earthly paradise; nor will it be possessed by any but undefiled persons, such as are made so through the blood and righteousness of Christ.

And that fadeth not away] As do this world, and the glory of it, and all inheritances and possessions in it; here is no continuing city, but there is one to come; in this inheritance are durable riches, everlasting habitations, an house eternal in the heavens, glories in it that will never wither and die, and pleasures which will never end, and which will be enjoyed without decrease or lothing.

Reserved in heaven for you] The Alexandrian copy reads, "for us;" and the Ethiopic version renders it, "for us and you;" for all the saints; for all who are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and who are begotten again to a lively hope; for these this inheritance is prepared, laid up, and secured in the hands of Christ their seoffee, who has it in trust for them, and with whom they are coheirs, and it is safe for them *in heaven*; out of the reach of men and devils: this serves both to commend the inheritance, to set forth the excellency of it, lying in such a place as heaven; for the situation of an inheritance adds oftentimes to the valuableness of it, and also the safety and security of it; it is safe, being in heaven, and more so as it is in Christ's hands there. The Jews are wont to call the future state, an inheritance of the land of the living: the say (r), "This is called, נחלה "an inheritance;" and add, "But in this world a man has no inheritance, nor continuance;" so they interpret that phrase, *by the God of thy father*, in Genesis xlix. 25. thus (s); "this is נחלה "the inheritance" of the superior place, which is called "heaven;" and sometimes they stile it, נחלה נאמנה "the superior inheritance," or, "the inheritance."

(r) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 3.
fol. 131. 2.

(s) Zohar in Gen.

“ritance above (t);” all which agrees with Peter’s language.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Who are kept by the power of God] This is a description of the persons for whom the inheritance is reserved in heaven; they are not only *chosen* to salvation, and *begotten* again to an inheritance, but they are *preserved* unto it; their happiness is very great; their inheritance is safe in heaven for them, and they are *kept* below, amidst a thousand snares and difficulties, till they safely arrive to the possession of that: they are kept, not in and by themselves, the way of man is not in himself; nor in the hands of angels, for no such trust does God put in them; but in the hands of Jesus Christ, where they are safe, and out of which none can pluck them; on him, as a foundation, and in him, as a stronghold; they are kept in the love of God, and on his heart, from whence they can never be separated, and in the covenant of grace, out of which they will never be put; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in the family of God, for being sons, they are no more servants; and in a state of grace and holiness, in the fear of God, and faith of Christ, and love to both; and in the path of truth, from whence they can never finally and totally fall: for though they are not kept from the being of sin, and the workings of it, and slips and falls into it, yet from being destroyed by it; and though not from Satan, and his temptations, yet from being overcome by them; and though not entirely from unbelief, doubts, and fears, yet from final unbelief; for Christ prays for them, that their faith fail not; and from a final and total falling away from grace into sin: and they are kept thus, not by their own power and might, or that of any mere creature, but *by the power of God*; meaning, not the Gospel, nor the Spirit of God, but the perfection of his power; by which they are kept, as with a guard, or in a garrison, as the word here used signifies; not only angels encamp about them, and salvation is for walls and bulwarks, all around them; but God himself, in the perfection of his power, is a wall of fire to them; he is round about them from henceforth and for ever; their place of defence is the munition of rocks; his name is a strong tower, where they run and are safe: it is added,

Through faith] Some versions read it, “and by

“faith,” as the Syriac and Ethiopic; by that faith which is of the operation of God, of which Christ is the author and finisher, and shall never fail, it being supported by the same power the saints are kept; through faith, in the power and faithfulness of God; through faith looking to Christ, leaning on him, and living upon him; by faith getting the victory over the world, and every other enemy, and being more than conquerors, through Christ. That to which the saints are kept is,

Unto salvation] Salvation is already obtained for them, by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and is applied to them in conversion, by the Spirit of Christ; but the full enjoyment of it, which is here intended, is reserved for them in heaven; and to this they are kept, being heirs of it, and shall certainly possess it: and which is

Ready to be revealed in the last time] It is ready, being a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and a salvation obtained by the blood of Christ, and a mansion of glory made fit for them, through the presence and intercession of their redeemer: and it is ready to be revealed; in a short time it will be made manifest; at present it is much out of sight; eye has not seen, nor ear heard the full glories of it; saints themselves as yet do not know what they shall be, and have: but *in the last time*; when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world, he will raise the dead bodies of his saints; and then this salvation shall be fully manifested to them; and they shall enjoy it both in soul and body to all eternity.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

Wherein ye greatly rejoice] The Vulgate Latin version reads, “in which ye shall rejoice;” and so the Syriac version, adding, “for ever;” and refer these words to the *last time*, or times, spoken of in the preceding verse; when the saints will greatly rejoice, being in full possession of eternal salvation; in distinction from the present time, in which they are in heaviness; but it is better to read the words in the present tense, and as expressive of the saints in this life, who are blessed with that fruit of the Spirit, joy, and have always reason to rejoice, and greatly rejoice. The connection is with the whole that goes before; and the sense is this, that regenerated persons rejoice, in that they are the elect of God, according to his everlasting love towards them, and free grace, and good will; in their regeneration, which is an evidence of their election of God; in the abundant mercy of God displayed in their regeneration;

(1) *Ibid.* in Exod. vol. 31. 3.

regeneration; and in that lively hope of eternal life which is the effect of it; and in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which secures their justification of life, and their resurrection from the dead; and in the inheritance they are born heirs unto; and in their preservation to it by the power of God through faith; and in that compleat salvation which is ready for them, and in a short time will be revealed, to which they are kept.

Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations] This seems to be a contrast, but is no real contradiction; for the character of the saints in this world is, that they are, *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. rejoicing even in their tribulations and temptations; yea, for them, and on account of them, in some respects, which in others make them sorrowful and heavy, or *heavy with sorrow*: the cause of this heaviness is not only indwelling corruptions, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan, but afflictions and persecutions, which are here meant by, *manifold temptations*; for not the temptations of Satan, or to sin, are here intended, but the temptations with which God tempts and tries his people: so he sometimes does, by calling them to hard service, to do things difficult and disagreeable to flesh and blood, in which way he tempted Abraham; and by laying afflictions, or suffering afflictions to come upon them, by which he tried Job; and by permitting wicked men to reproach and persecute them, and to injure them in their characters, persons, and properties; and which was the case of the primitive christians, and has been more or less the case of the saints ever since: now such exercises are called, from the quality of them, *temptations*, or trials; because they try the hearts, principles, and graces of them that believe, and particularly their faith hereafter mentioned; and from the quantity of them, they are said to be, *various*; they are of different sorts; as reproach, imprisonment, loss of goods, and death itself in divers shapes; and are more or less at different times and ages; and are exercised on various persons: and are sometimes very heavy, and grievous to be born, and cause great heaviness and sorrow of heart; and yet there are things and circumstances, and which are here hinted at, that greatly mitigate the heaviness occasioned by them; as, that these afflictions, and the heaviness that comes by them, are but *little*, and light, in comparison of the eternal weight of glory; though they are great tribulations in themselves, through and out of which the people of God come to the kingdom; and so the Syriac version renders it, "though at this time *ܠܝܠ* ye are a little made sorrowful;"

and then it is only *now*, for the present time, and but for a short time; for a little season, even for a moment, comparatively speaking; and also, *if need be*, which the Syriac version omits, though by all means to be retained: afflictive dispensations, in whatsoever form, are necessary, by the will of God, who has appointed them, and therefore must be, and ought to be, quietly submitted to and patiently born, on that consideration; and are also necessary, on account of Christ the head, to whom there must be a conformity of his members; and likewise on their own account; for the humbling of their souls; for the weaning of them from the things of this world; for the restraining, subduing, and keeping under the corruptions of their nature; and for the trial of grace: and it is only *if*, and when there is a necessity for them, that they are in heaviness by them; otherwise God does not delight to afflict and grieve the children of men, and much less his own; see *Lam. iii. 33.* so the Jews say (*u*), that חורר "there was a necessity of God's tempting Abraham as he did, to humble and purify him."

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

That the trial of your faith] This is the principal end which God has in afflictive providences, to try the faith of his people; so the faith of Abraham, Job, Habakkuk, and others, have been tried.

Being much more precious than of gold that perisheth] The grace of faith is much more precious than gold; since that perisheth by using, but faith does not; and since it is so valuable as not to be obtained by it; and since those that have it, though poor in this world, are rich, and heirs of a kingdom: but the *trying* of it is abundantly more precious than gold; for not only as gold being tried in the fire is purged from its dross, and is proved to be genuine, and shines the brighter; so faith being tried in the fire of afflictions, is purged from unbelief; and the believer is purged from his dross and tin, and his iniquity is purged, and the fruit of all is to take away sin; and he is tried and proved to be a true believer, and his faith shines the more illustriously, as in the above instances: yea, the very trying of it has an influence on other graces, for great usefulness; for the trying of faith works

(u) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 22. 7.

works patience, and that, experience, and that, hope.

Though it be tried with fire] Either though gold be tried with fire, and so is greatly refined, yet it is more precious than that; or though faith be tried with the fire of afflictions, yet it is precious, and more precious than gold: and it is tried for this purpose, that it

Might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ] Who is now in the highest heavens, and out of sight, but will appear a second time without sin unto salvation, and every eye shall see him; and when the believer will be found in him, and his faith be found unto praise by him, he will have praise of him himself; it will be said unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant*; his faith will be praised for its steadiness and constancy, notwithstanding all persecutions and tribulations; and his good works, the fruits of faith, will be taken notice of by him with commendation; he will be honoured, by being placed on the right hand of Christ, and by being set down with him in his throne, and having a crown of righteousness given to him; and he will be glorified both in soul and body; his body will be made like to Christ's glorious body, and his soul will have a glory revealed in it; and in his whole person he shall appear, when Christ does, with him in glory.

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Whom having not seen, ye love] That is, Jesus Christ, whom they had never seen with their bodily eyes, being Jews, who dwelt not in Judea when Christ was upon earth, but were scattered about in several parts of the Gentile world; and yet Christ being made known to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, they received and embraced him, and their affections were strongly set upon him: they loved him because of his excellencies and perfections, because of the loveliness of his person, and because he first loved them; they loved him because of the fulness of grace that was in him, because of what he had done for them, and was unto them, and because of the offices he sustained on their account, and the relations he stood in to them; they loved him above all creatures and things, and all of him, and that belong unto him, his people, truths, ordinances, ways, and worship; they loved him with all their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, though they have never seen his face in the flesh; whereas

sight often begets and increases love: their love was not carnal, but spiritual; it was a fruit of the Spirit of God in their souls; was accompanied with faith in Christ, and proceeded upon the report the Gospel made of him.

In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing] The Arabic version adds, "in him;" that is, in Christ, who was then received up into heaven, and must be retained there until the time of the restitution of all things; and therefore not now to be beheld with corporeal sight: and yet these regenerate ones, and lovers of Christ, believed in him; see *John* xx. 29. not with a notional, historical, and temporary faith, believing not merely what he said, or did, or does, or will do; but looking on him, and to him, for life and salvation; going out of themselves to him, embracing of him, leaning upon him as their Saviour and Redeemer; venturing their souls upon him, committing their all unto him, expecting all from him, both grace and glory: and so

Rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory] With a joy in believing on him, which is better experienced than expressed; a joy that not only strangers intermeddle not with, know nothing of, which entirely passes their understanding, but is such as saints themselves cannot speak out, or give a full and distinct account of; they want words to express it, and convey proper ideas of it to others: and it is a joy that is glorious; there is a rejoicing that is evil, and scandalous; but this is honourable, and of which none need be ashamed; it is solid and substantial, and the matter of it always abiding, when the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; it is a joy on account of the glory of God, which the believer lies in the hope and faith of; and it is a beginning, a preface, and pledge of it; it is a glory begun here; it is the first-fruits, and a part also of it; and by it saints may know a little what heaven itself will be.

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Which is a just and sufficient ground of joy, and rejoicing. Salvation intends spiritual and eternal salvation; that which God appointed his people to from all eternity, which is obtained by Christ, applied by the Spirit, and will be fully enjoyed in heaven: this is the salvation of souls; which are of more worth than a world; and the redemption of which is precious, and requires a great price, and for which a great price is paid, as in *y.* 18, 19. It is rightly supplied in our version by *your*, as in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; though the Vulgate Latin version

sion only reads, "the salvation of souls;" and which is to be understood, not to the exclusion of bodies, for God has designed the salvation of them; and Christ has procured the redemption of them; and these will be preserved unto the coming of Christ, being united to him; and will be raised by him, and with their souls enjoy everlasting happiness with him; though in the present state of things, salvation rather takes place in the soul than in the body, which is exposed to various labours, afflictions, and diseases; but the chief design of the phrase, is to distinguish this salvation from a corporal and temporal one: and so the Jews use the phrase, *תועלת הנפש* "the salvation of the soul (x)," in opposition to, and distinction from a mere bodily one; and it intends a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses; from hell, the second death, and wrath to come, and every spiritual enemy: which is *the end of faith*; or, as the Syriac version renders it, *פרענות* "the reward of faith;" not that faith is the cause of salvation, or meritorious of it; for that itself is the gift of God, and is rather a part of salvation, and at most, but the means of perceiving an interest in it, and of enjoying the comfort of it; and is what will issue in it, and in the full enjoyment of it; when faith will both have its end and scope, and be at an end, being exchanged for fruition; just as a reward is given at the end of a man's labours; hence it is called, *תועלת* *the end*, Prov. xxiii. 18. and even now salvation is the end of faith, in like sense as Christ is the end of the law: as the law has its full accomplishment, and all its ends answered in Christ, so faith has its end, and all it looks for, desires, and wants; in salvation by Christ: and which is now *receiving*; for the saints not only shall receive, and enjoy the full possession of it hereafter, but they have it now; it is not only appointed to them, and wrought out for them, but is brought near, set before them, and applied to them, and put into the hands of faith by the Spirit of God; they have it in faith and hope, by which they are already saved; and in Christ their head and representative, in whom they are set down in heavenly places; and besides, they have the beginning, first fruits, earnest, and pledge of it in their own hearts, as well as a right unto, and a meetness for the perfect possession of it hereafter; all which is matter of joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come unto you*:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired] They greatly desired the coming of the Saviour, and to see him; they longed after the salvation to be accomplished by him, and expressed their wishes for him, and that; and inquired into the nature of it, and gave an account thereof, according to the measure of light and knowledge communicated to them; they pointed out Christ as a redeemer of his people, and his salvation as spiritual and eternal.

And searched diligently] In the use of means; by prayer and supplication; by reading the prophecies that went before; by observing the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law; and by waiting upon the Lord for the inspiration of his Spirit. This last clause is omitted in the Syriac version, but rightly retained in all others.

Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you] Jews, and also the Gentiles. They prophesied both of Christ, who is the unspeakable gift of God's free grace, who is full of grace, and by whom it comes; and also of the several blessings of grace through Christ, as of redeeming grace from sin, Satan, death, and the grave; of justifying grace, through his righteousness, he being the Lord our righteousness, in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and glory; for though his righteousness is revealed without the law, yet it is witnessed to by law and prophets; of pardoning grace, as with God, and as a blessing of the new covenant, and as received through faith in Christ, to which give all the prophets witness; of adopting grace, both to Jews and Gentiles, signifying, that where they were not called the people of God, they should be called the sons of God; of regenerating and sanctifying grace, in giving a new heart and spirit, in sprinkling with clean water, in writing the laws of God in the inward parts, and pouring out the Spirit in a plenteous manner on all sorts of men; of preserving grace, intimating, that they that fear the Lord shall not depart from him, and that his loving-kindness shall never depart from them; and of eternal life and glory, as God's free gift, which is that everlasting salvation, they say, Israel shall be saved in the Lord with.

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Searching what, or what manner of time] The prophets made a very diligent inquiry into the exact time when Christ should come to work out the

(x) Tr. for Hammer, fol. 168. 4.

the salvation of his people; to whom it was made known that his coming should be before the sceptre, or tribe of Judah, and all civil government in it, ceased; and before the second temple was destroyed, into which the Messiah, the messenger of the covenant, was to come, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and that it should be seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, from a date given in *Dan. ix. 24—26.* as it was revealed to the prophet Daniel; who particularly inquired, and diligently searched into this matter, and was eminently a man of desires this way, as he is styled, *Dan. ix. 23.* and they not only searched into the exact time, but into the manner and quality of the time when the Saviour should come; and foretold that it would be, with respect to the nations of the world, a time of profound peace; with respect to the Jews, that it would be a time of great blindness, ignorance, unbelief, and hardness of heart; that such would be that generation, or age, for wickedness and barbarity, as could not be declared and expressed; and that few would believe the report of the Gospel; and that the Messiah would be rejected of men, and be wounded, bruised, and put to death; and with respect to the Gentiles, that the Gospel would be preached to them, and that they should seek to Christ, be gathered to him, and hope and trust in him; and that the followers of the Messiah should be persecuted, and greatly distressed, and yet comforted and sustained; and this should be the face of the times, and the state of things, when the salvation should be revealed: and all this, and much more,

The Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify] Or “make manifest;” from whence it appears, that Christ then existed, as he did before there were any prophets, and even from everlasting, being the eternal God; and that the Spirit is from him, as well as from the Father; and as here, so he is often, by the Jews (a), called, רוח משיח “the Spirit of the Messiah or “Christ;” and that the Spirit is truly God, since he could declare beforehand the exact time of Christ’s coming, and the quality of the age in which he came, as well as bear a previous testimony to his sufferings and glory; as also, that he was in the prophets, and they were inspired by him, and spake as he moved and directed them.

When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow] The sufferings of Christ, are what the Jews call (b), חבלי של משיח “the sorrows of the Messiah.” These are par-

ticularly testified of in *Psalms xxii.* and *lxix. lfa. liii.* and *Dan. ix. 26.* and *Zech. xii. 10.* The glory, or glories, as it may be rendered, design his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and having all power, authority, and judgment committed to him; and which are eminently and distinctly prophesied of in *Psalms xvi. 10.* and *lxviii. 18.* and *cx. 1.* and *Dan. vii. 13, 14.*

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Unto whom it was revealed] The salvation they searched and inquired into, and the grace of it; the time of its being wrought out, and what sort of times they would be when Christ should come, both to the church, and to the world, among Jews and Gentiles; as also what cruel sufferings the Messiah should undergo, and what great glory should be put upon him afterwards.

That not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister] The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “unto you;” and so do some copies. Not that they were ignorant of the things they searched into, and were revealed unto them, and they prophesied of; as the Jews sometimes say (c) of them, “That they prophesied, and “knew not what they prophesied of;” though it is not to be supposed that they had such clear and distinct ideas of things, as saints have now under the Gospel-dispensation; yet they knew much of the grace of the Gospel, and had the comfort of it, and a view of interest in the great salvation, and saw the day of Christ afar off with pleasure: nor that they did not minister, and were not useful to the saints of the age in which they lived; for their prophecies concerning Christ, and salvation by him, were particularly calculated for their spiritual refreshment and comfort, and the support of their faith and hope under afflictive circumstances; but then they were not to have their accomplishment in their times; for though they sometimes speak of them, because of the certainty of them, as if they were already done, yet they knew they were not to be brought about until the last days; and therefore what was written by them, was written for our learning and instruction chiefly, and principally, on whom the ends of

(a) Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & passim.

(b) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. & passim.

(c) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2.

of the world are come: and though they were both profitable to themselves, and others that lived with them, yet they are more so to the saints under the Gospel-dispensation, who are able to compare prophecies and facts together: even

The things, which are now reported unto you] As accomplished facts; such as relate to the person and offices of Christ, and salvation wrought out by him; to his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; of all which there is a true and faithful report made in the Gospel.

By them that have preached the Gospel unto you] Meaning himself, and the rest of the apostles, who had been called, and qualified, and sent out by Christ to preach glad tidings, and publish peace, which they had done in the several parts of the world, both to Jew and Gentile.

With the holy Ghost sent down from heaven] By Christ from the Father, particularly at the day of Pentecost, when the apostles had an extraordinary and plentiful effusion of the Spirit, qualifying them to preach the Gospel to which they were called and sent: and thus, as the great salvation is commended, from the concern that the prophets of old had in it, so from the preaching of it by the apostles, who were influenced and guided by the same Spirit of Christ as they were, and in a far greater manner; and this salvation is still more commended from the great regard the blessed angels have unto it.

Which things the angels desired so look into] The Vulgate Latin version reads, "into whom;" either into the holy Spirit, and the things of the Spirit, which he testified in the prophets, and published by the apostles; or rather into Christ, his person, offices, and grace, the allusion being to the cherubim on the mercy-seat, a type of Christ, which looked to one another, and to the mercy-seat, *Exod. xxv. 20.* and was true of them in the days of Christ's flesh, when they ascended and descended on the son of man, *John i. 51.* and when he rose from the dead, and went to heaven; for then was he seen and gazed on by angels, as he now is, *1 Tim. iii. 16.* or "into which things;" so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; namely, the sufferings of Christ, and the glories following; the great mystery of redemption and salvation by Christ; the several doctrines of the Gospel, in which the glory of the grace, wisdom, righteousness, truth, and power of God is displayed; things they are highly delighted with, take pleasure in the contemplation of, and desire to have a greater knowledge of, and acquaintance with: they sung glory to God in the highest at

the incarnation of Christ; they rejoiced at the conversion of a sinner; and disdain not to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and learn of the church the manifold wisdom of God; which may serve greatly to commend the excellency of Gospel-truths, and engage us in the study of them.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind] With the girdle of truth; see *Eph. vi. 14.* since angels desire to look into the mysteries of grace, do you apply your minds, and diligently attend unto them, in opposition to all loose and vagrant thoughts of the mind, about other things: give yourselves up wholly to them, meditate upon them, employ yourselves in them, and about them; seeing they are the study and inquiry of angels, and what the prophets have prophesied of, and searched into, and ministered, and the apostles of Christ have preached; and besides, are things which relate to the person, office, sufferings, and glory of Christ, and the salvation of immortal souls. Though the phrase is sometimes used to denote preparation and readiness, and to be in a fit position to do any thing, as the Israelites were at the eating of the first passover, to march at the least notice out of Egypt; and so to go a journey, to run a race, to serve another, to wait on him, and for him, and also be prepared for battle; and is a metaphor taken from the custom of the eastern nations, who use to wear long garments, which they gathered up close to them, and girt about them, when they were about any of the above things, that they might be no hindrance to them, and that they might perform them with more expedition and dispatch; and so may be expressive of the readiness of believers, as pilgrims and travellers, for their journey towards the heavenly country, and to run the race set before them, and also to do every good work, according to the station they are placed in, to serve their Lord and Master Jesus Christ in whatsoever he calls them to, and to wait for his coming; see *Luke xii. 35—37.* and also to fight his battles, to quit themselves like men, and be strong in defence of his Gospel, and against every enemy of his and theirs.

Be sober] Which is not only opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which greatly disqualifies for the above readiness and attention; but also to a being inebriated with the cares of this life, which choke the word, and make it unfruitful,

fruitful, and lead men into temptation, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, and from the faith of Christ; and likewise to a being intoxicated with errors, and false doctrine, which lull men asleep, and render them incapable of serving Christ, and his church; and turn their heads from faith to fables, and are contrary to the words of truth and soberness; so that to *be sober*, is not only to be moderate in eating and drinking, but to be disengaged from the anxious cares of the world, and to be disentangled, recovered, or awaked from the error of the wicked.

And hope to the end] Or *perfectly*, as the Greek word may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version, which joins it with the other phrase, and renders it, "be ye perfectly awaked." The Arabic version renders it, "trusting with a perfect confidence;" so that it designs either the nature of that lively hope, to which they were begotten again, and are here exhorted to exercise, it being perfect, sincere, and without hypocrisy; not like the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish, and stand him in no stead, but an undissembled one; for as there is faith unfeigned, and love without dissimulation, so hope without hypocrisy; and also the full assurance of it; for as there is a plerophory of faith, and love, and of understanding, so of hope; see *Heb. vi. 11.* or it intends the duration of this grace, and the exercise of it: it is a grace that does, and will remain, and it ought to be continually exercised, and the rejoicing of it to be kept firm, *to the end*; to the end of life, and until the saints come to the enjoyment of what they are hoping for; even

For the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ] And which may be rendered for the grace that is brought unto you, in, or by the revelation of Jesus Christ: and the sense may be, that there is grace that is now brought to light by the Gospel, and that is brought home to the souls of God's people thro' it; as electing grace, redeeming grace, justifying grace, pardoning grace, adopting grace; and in short, salvation, as all of grace; which Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ: it is a revelation that is made by him; and it is a revelation that is made of him; it is a revelation of the glory of his person and offices; herein is his righteousness revealed from faith to faith; and here the riches of his grace are made manifest, and laid to open view; life and immortality are brought to light by Christ in it; and the way to eternal life, glory, and salvation, as being by Christ is pointed out by it; and all this grace that is brought, and set before the saints in the Gospel, they ought to hope for, and comfortably believe their interest

in; and continue thus hoping, believing, and trusting to the end of their days: or if our version, and which is that of others also, be retained, the meaning is, that eternal glory and happiness, which is called *grace*, because it is the free gift of God through Christ, to his children and flock, and is the finishing of the grace that is bestowed on them, and wrought in them, and is future, *is to be brought*; is a glory that shall be revealed in them, and a salvation ready to be revealed to them; and which will be done, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven, when he shall appear a second time, and in glory; and is, and ought to be, the object of their hope, for it is laid up, and reserved for them; and they have the earnest of it in them, as well as the promise of it to them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions, instead of *grace*, read *joy*; and is the same with eternal glory, the joy of the Lord prepared for them, and which they shall enter into.

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

As obedient children] Or "children of obedience." This may be connected either with what goes before, that seeing they were children of God, by adopting grace, and in regeneration brought to the obedience of faith, to whom the inheritance belonged, therefore they ought to continue hoping for it; or with what follows, that since they were manifestly the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus, being begotten again to a lively hope, they ought to be followers of him, and imitate him in holiness and righteousness, and shew themselves to be obedient ones to his Gospel and ordinances, as children ought to honour, and obey, and imitate their parents.

Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance] The phrase is much the same with that in *Romans xii. 2.* *Be not conformed to this world*; for to be conformed, or fashioned to the world, is to be fashioned to the lusts of it; and to be fashioned to the lusts of it, is to indulge them, to make provision for them, to obey them, to live and walk in them; which should not be done by the children of God, and who profess themselves to be obedient ones to the Gospel, which teaches otherwise; and that because they are *lusts*, foolish, hurtful, and deceitful ones, ungodly ones; the lusts of the devil, as well as of the world, and of the flesh, and which war against the soul; and because they are *former* ones, which they served in a time of unregeneracy, and were now convinced and ashamed of, and therefore should no longer live to them; the time past of

life being sufficient to have walked in them : and because they were lusts *in ignorance*, which they indulged in a state of ignorance ; not of Gentilism, though this might be the case of some, but of Judaism ; when they knew not God, especially in Christ, and were ignorant of his righteousness, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as committed against a law that was holy and spiritual ; nor did they know Christ, and the way of salvation by him, but thought they ought to do many things contrary to his name ; nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration, saying with Nicodemus, *How can these things be ?* Nor the true sense of the scriptures, the sacred oracles, that were committed to them ; much less the Gospel, which was hidden from them, and they were enemies to : but now it was otherwise with them ; they were made *light* in the Lord, and had knowledge of all these things ; and therefore as their light increased, and the grace of God bringing salvation, appeared unto them, and shone out on them, it became them to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and not to walk as they had done before, since they had not so learned Christ.

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ;

But as he which hath called you is holy] Which is a periphrasis of God the Father, who had called them, not merely in an external way, by the outward ministry of the word ; but internally, powerfully, and efficaciously, by his Spirit and grace ; and who had called them to holiness of life and conversation, as well as in calling had implanted principles of holiness in them, and therefore is said to call them with an holy calling ; and who himself is holy, naturally, perfectly, and originally, and in such sense as no creature is, angels or men ; and is glorious in holiness, and is the source and fountain of holiness in others : therefore

So be ye holy in all manner of conversation] Which respects not internal holiness, but supposes it ; for that is God's work, and not the creature's act ; it is the sanctification of the Spirit, of which he is the author ; this they were chosen unto from the beginning, and made partakers of in regeneration ; but external holiness, holiness of life and conversation, in all the parts and branches of it, both with respect to God and men, in matters both of religion, and civil life : and to be holy in this sense, is an imitating of God, a copying after him, though he is far from being equalled by a sinful creature, or even by an angel in heaven ; however, the arguments to it, taken from the na-

ture of God, and of his effectual calling to grace and holiness, are very strong and powerful ; for it is walking worthy of him, who has called us to his kingdom and glory ; and walking worthy of that vocation wherein we are called ; and a following of God, as dear and obedient children ; and what is according to his will, and what he directs unto, and requires, as appears from what follows.

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy.

Because it is written] In Lev. xi. 44. and chapters xix. 2. and xx. 7.

Be ye holy ; for I am holy] An argument the apostle knew must have weight with these persons, who were chiefly Jews, scattered abroad among the Gentiles, and had a value for the scriptures of truth ; and therefore, as the argument for holiness of life, from the nature and perfections of God is strong, it must receive additional strength from this being the declared will of God, even their sanctification, on this account ; and though holiness equal to God's is never to be attained to by a creature, yet so far as it is capable of it, it is desirable, because agreeable both to the nature and will of God, by all such who are truly his children, who love his name, adore his perfections, give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, fear his goodness, and obey his will.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear :

And if ye call on the Father] Of Christ, and of all the saints ; or *seeing* ye do. This is a fresh argument, engaging to holiness of life and conversation. Invocation of God, includes the whole worship of him, the performance of every outward duty, and the exercise of every inward grace, particularly it designs *prayer* ; and whoever are concerned in one, or the other, God will be sanctified by all of them that draw nigh unto him : or the phrase may here intend an asserting God to be their Father, under the influence of the Spirit of adoption ; and all such that do claim so near a relation to God, ought to honour and obey him, and to be followers of him : whoever call God their Father, and themselves his children, ought to be careful that they do not blaspheme, or cause to be blasphemed, that worthy name by which they are called.

Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work] This is another reason why
men

men should be holy, taken from the general judgment; for this God that is a Father, is also a Judge. There is a judgment after death, which is sure and certain, and reaches to all persons and things; and though the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, yet he will judge every one by that man, Christ, whom he has ordained to be the judge of quick and dead: before his judgment-seat all must stand, where they will be impartially, and without respect of persons, tried; no account will be had of what nation and place they are, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of this, or the other country, unless to aggravate or lessen their condemnation; for it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrha, than for such who have been favoured with a Gospel-revelation, and believe it not; nor from what parents they have descended, for the soul that sins, that shall die; nor of what age and sex they are, small and great shall stand before him; nor of what state and condition, rich or poor, high or low, bond or free; or of what religious sect and denomination, or whether they have conformed to some external things or not; no regard will be had to any outward appearance or profession. The judge will not judge according to the sight of the eyes, and outward view of things; for he looks on the heart, and knows the secret springs of all actions; and according thereunto will he judge and pass the sentence; and therefore what manner of persons ought men to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Hence it follows,

Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear] The people of God in this world are *sojourners*, as all their fathers were; they are not natives of the place in which they are; though they are in the world, they are not of it; they were natives of it by their first birth, but by their second they are born again from above, and so belong to another place; they are of another country, even an heavenly one; they are citizens of another city, a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; their citizenship is in heaven; and there is their Father's house, which is not made with hands, and is eternal; and there lies their estate, their inheritance; and though they dwell here below, neither their settlement, nor their satisfaction are here; they reckon themselves not at home whilst they are on earth, and are strangers in it, to the men of the world, and they to them; with whom they have not, or at least ought not to have, any fellowship. It is indeed but for a time that they are sojourners, not an eternity; which time is fixed, and is very short, and will be quickly gone: it is but a little while,

and Christ will come and take *his* home to his Father's house, where they shall be for ever with him; for it is only here on earth that they are pilgrims and strangers: and whilst they are so, they should spend their time *in fear*; not of men, nor of devils, nor of death and judgment, hell and eternal damnation; for such a fear is not consistent with the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and is the effect of the Law, and not encouraged by the Gospel; is in natural men, yea in devils themselves; but in the fear of God, and which springs from the grace of God, and is increased by it; is consistent with the strongest acts of faith, and with the greatest expressions of spiritual joy; is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and includes the whole worship of God, external and internal, and a religious conversation, in humility and lowliness of mind.

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

Forasmuch as ye know] From the scriptures of truth, by the testimony of the Spirit, by his work upon the soul, and by the application of the benefits of redemption, such as justification, pardon, adoption, and sanctification; see *Job* xix. 25. *Gal.* ii. 20.

That ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold] The redemption of a soul, which is of more worth than a world, requires a greater price than gold and silver; and those who have the largest share thereof, can neither redeem their own souls with it, nor the souls of others. The soul is immortal and incorruptible, but these are corruptible things, which may be cankered or wear away, and perish by using; and therefore, seeing redemption is not obtained by any thing corruptible, nothing corrupt in principle or practice should be indulged. The allusion is to the redemption of the people of Israel, and of the first-born by shekels, *Exodus* xxx. 12, 13. *Numbers* iii. 46—48. Gold and silver do not mean pieces of of gold and silver, but gold and silver coined; for only by such could redemption of any thing be obtained (*d*); but these are insufficient for the redemption of the soul; which is a deliverance of it from the slavery of sin, the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law, the captivity of Satan, and from a state of poverty, having been deep in debt, and sold under sin. It here follows,

From

(d) Maimon. & Bartenora in *Mish. Beracot.* c. 7. §. 1.

From your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers] Meaning not the corruption of nature, which is propagated from father to son by natural generation, and lies in the vanity of the mind, and is the spring and source of an evil conversation; though the saints, as they are redeemed from all sin, so from this, that it shall not be their condemnation; nor Gentilism, which lay in vain philosophy, in idolatry and superstition, and in an evil and wicked conversation, encouraged by the example of their ancestors; but Judaism, and either regards the ceremonial law, which was delivered by Moses to the Jewish fathers, and by them handed down to their posterity; and which was vain, as used and abused by them, and was unprofitable to obtain righteousness, life and salvation by, and therefore was disannulled by Christ, who has redeemed and delivered his people from this yoke of bondage; or rather, the traditions of the elders, which our Lord inveighs against, *Matt. xv. 3, &c.* and the apostle Paul was brought up in, and zealous of, before conversion, *Gal. i. 14.* as the Pharisees were. These were the inventions and decrees of them they called, אבות "fathers," to whose dogmas and decisions, they paid the utmost respect. These made up their oral law, which the Jews say (e) Moses received from Sinai, and delivered to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders; and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, the last of which was Simeon the just; and from him it was delivered to another; and so from one to another to the times of Christ, and his apostles, and afterwards; and which consisted of many vain, useless, and unprofitable things; to walk according to which must be a vain conversation; and the saints now being redeemed by a greater price than that of silver and gold, and which is after mentioned, they ought not therefore to be the servants of men, no not of these fathers, but of God and Christ.

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;

But with the precious blood of Christ] Christ was prophesied of as a redeemer under the Old Testament, *Isaiah lix. 20.* and the Jews frequently ascribe redemption to the Word of the Lord God (f); and which the apostle here attributes to the blood of Christ; whose blood is the same with ours, only not tainted with sin; the

blood of an innocent person, and of one who is God, as well as man, and was freely shed in the room and stead of his people, and so a sufficient price for their redemption; and it may truly be said to be *precious*; as it is to God, to whom it is a sweet-smelling sacrifice, and with which he is well pleased; not that he takes delight in the mere effusion of his blood, but as this is the ransom-price, and the atonement of his chosen ones; and so it is to all them that believe, since by it they are justified; through it they have the forgiveness of their sins; their peace and reconciliation with God is made by it; and by it they are sanctified, and have boldness to enter into the holiest of all: and this blood of Christ, by which they are redeemed, is

As of a lamb without blemish and without spot] Christ is comparable to any lamb, for the innocence of his nature, the meekness of his disposition of his deportment, and for his patience under sufferings, and in death; and to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were typical of the continual and constant virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice to take away sin; and particularly to the paschal lamb; he being the true passover sacrificed for us; and which, as also the lambs of the daily sacrifice, and all others, were to be without spot and blemish; in which they prefigured Christ, who is without the stain of original, and the spot and blemish of actual sin; and so was a very fit person to be a sacrifice for sin, and a redeemer of his people. The Jews have a notion, that the redemption of the Israelites out of Egypt, when a lamb without blemish was taken, and sacrificed, and eat, had a respect to the future redemption by the Messiah; and which, they say (g), "was to be in the same time of the year; that as they were redeemed in Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, so they were to be redeemed in the same month;" and indeed at that time, and in that month, was redemption obtained by the blood of Christ. It is observable, that the Hebrew word, דם signifies both *blood* and *money*, or price; whether some reference may not be had to this here, since both are included here, may be considered.

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Who verily was foreordained] Or "fore-known;" that is, by God; and which intends, not barely his prescience of Christ, of what he

(e) *Piske Abot*, c. 1. §. 1, 2, &c. *Is. 72 & iii. 2.* & in *Joel ii. 17.*

(f) *Targum in Hof.*

(g) *Zohar in Num. fol. 10a. 3.*

he should be, do, and suffer; but such a previous knowledge of him, which is joined with love and affection to him; not merely as his own Son, and the express image of his person, but as a mediator; and whom he loved before the world was, and with a love of complacency and delight, and which will last forever. It includes the choice of him as the head of the election, and the pre-ordination of his human nature, to the grace of union to his divine person, and the pre-appointment of him to various things. The Syriac version adds, "to this;" that is, to be the lamb for a sacrifice, to be a propitiation for the sins of his people, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them by his precious blood. The allusion is to the taking of the passover-lamb from the sheep, or from the goats, and keeping it separate, from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month, before it was slain; so Christ, as man, was chosen out from among the people; and as Joseph's antitype was separated from his brethren, and that

Before the foundation of the world] For all God's decrees and appointments, relating either to Christ, or his people, are eternal; no new thoughts, counsels, and resolutions, are taken up by him in time. The affair of redemption by Christ, is no new thing; the scheme of it was drawn in eternity; the persons to be redeemed were fixed on; the redeemer was appointed in the council and covenant of peace; and even the very Gospel, which proclaims it, was ordained before the world, for our glory. A Saviour was provided before sin was committed, and the method of man's recovery was settled before his ruin took place; and which was done without any regard to the works and merits of men, but is wholly owing to the free and sovereign grace of God, and to his everlasting love, both to the redeemer, and the redeemed. The Jews (*b*) reckon the name of the Messiah among the seven things that were created before the world was; in proof of which they mention *Psaln lxxii. 17.*

But was manifest in these last times for you] He was before, he existed from everlasting; he lay in the bosom of his Father from all eternity; and was veiled and hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law during the legal dispensation; but in the fulness of time was manifest in the flesh, and more clearly revealed in the Gospel, and to the souls of men; his manifestation in human nature is principally intended, and which was in the last times of the legal dispensation, at the end of the Jewish world or state, when a new world, or the world to come, took place. It is a rule with

the Jews (*i*), that whenever the last days, or times, are mentioned, the times of the Messiah are designed: and this manifestation of Christ was for the sake of some particular persons, even for all God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, and who are described in the following verse. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for us;" and the Ethiopic version, "for him."

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Who by him do believe in God] Christ, as God, is the object of faith; as Mediator, he is the way to the Father, by which men come to him, believe in him, and lay hold upon him, as their covenant-God and Father; and is also the author of that faith by which they believe in him; and all their encouragement to believe is taken from him; and such who do come to God, by Christ, and stay themselves upon him, trusting in him, may know, and comfortably conclude, that Christ who was fore-ordained from all eternity to be the redeemer of his people; was manifest in the flesh for their sakes, and to obtain eternal redemption for them, which he was sent to do, by him

That raised him up from the dead] Mention being made of his blood, as the price of redemption, *ψ. 19.* supposes that he died; and lest it should be thought that he was held by the pains of death, and under the power of it, which it was impossible he should, considering the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and the fulfilment of his engagements, as the surety of his people; his resurrection from the dead is asserted, which was not only foretold by himself, but predicted by the prophets, and was punctually accomplished; and which, as here, is usually ascribed to God the Father, though not to the exclusion of Christ himself, who had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; and which is a very great encouragement to faith in God, both with respect to justification in his sight, and acceptance with him, since Christ rose again for our justification, and with regard to a future resurrection.

And gave him glory] By raising him from the dead, when his body became a glorious one, being raised spiritual, powerful, and incorruptible; and by his ascension to heaven, being received up in

(b) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 59. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 39. 2.

(i) Kimchi in Ia. ii. 2.

in a cloud, attended by thousand of angels, and triumphing over the powers of darkness; and by placing him at his own right hand, which is an honour never bestowed on any mere creature; and by possessing him with the gifts of the Spirit for men, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and authority to exercise judgment on all, and a name above every name in this, or the world to come.

That your faith and hope might be in God] Which are graces that go together, and much resemble and assist each other; they are both the gifts of God, and have him for their object, and meet in the same persons; and are greatly encouraged by the resurrection of Christ, and the glory he now enjoys, since because he lives, those that believe in him shall live also, and appear with him in glory.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*:

Seeing ye have purified your souls] The apostle passes to another exhortation, namely, to brotherly love; the ground of which he makes to be the purification of their souls; and which supposes that they had been impure; and indeed, their whole persons, souls and bodies, were so by nature; even all the members of their bodies, and all the powers and faculties of their souls: it is internal purity, purity of the heart, that is here particularly respected; though not to the exclusion of outward purity, for where there is the former, there will be the latter; but there may be an external purity, where there is not the inward one: this the apostle ascribes to the saints themselves, but not without the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the operations of his Spirit; as appears by a following clause; but they are said to purify themselves, inasmuch as having the grace of faith, bestowed on them, they were enabled, under the influences of the Spirit of God, to exercise it on the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin.

In obeying the truth] Of the Gospel, by receiving, believing, and embracing it, in the love of it; which teaches outward purity, and is a means, in the hand of the Spirit, of inward purity, and of directing to the purifying blood of Jesus, who sanctifies and cleanses by the word.

Through the Spirit] This clause is left out in

the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Arabic version, and ought to be retained; for, as Christ died to purify to himself a peculiar people, the Spirit of Christ does from him purify the heart, by faith in his blood; by sprinkling that on the conscience, and by leading the faith of God's people to the fountain of it, to wash in for sin and for uncleanness; even both their consciences and their conversation-garments, whereby they obtain inward and outward purity.

Unto unfeigned love of the brethren] Which is the end of sanctification, and an evidence of it; when the saints are loved as brethren, and because such; and with a love without dissimulation, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: this being the case, the exhortation follows;

See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently] This is Christ's new commandment, and the evidence of regeneration; a distinguishing badge of christianity, and without which all profession of religion is a vain and empty thing: this should be mutual and cordial; should proceed from the heart, and from an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; and should be with warmth and fervency, and not with coldness and indifference; though the word here used, *καταστον*, may not only design the intenseness of it, but the extensiveness of it also; as that it should reach to all the saints, the poor as well as the rich, and the lesser as well as the greater and more knowing believers; and likewise may denote the continuance of it; it ought to be continually exercised, and to last always; and so the Arabic version renders it, "with a perpetual love."

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Being born again] As they were of God, according to his abundant mercy, by the resurrection of Christ, to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; as in *1. 3.* and therefore seeing they were brethren in a spiritual relation, they ought to love as brethren; being children of the same Father, belonging to the same family and household, having the same Spirit, and the same nature and disposition, and being members one of another, and heirs of the same grace and glory; and not only so, but were taught of God their Father in regeneration to love one another: it became them highly therefore to exercise that grace, and particularly, since they were born,

Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible] Referring

ferring not to seed cast into the earth, which first corrupts and dies, and then is quickened and rises, and brings forth fruit; but to human seed, and which the Jews call *מין מן* "the filthy drop (*k*);" which is in itself corrupt, and is corrupted, and whereby the corruption of human nature is propagated; for whatsoever is born of the flesh, is carnal and corrupt; and so the apostle has reference to the first birth, or natural generation of men, in which they are polluted and depraved, and confirms what the evangelist says, *John* i. 13. that regenerate persons are not *born of blood*; or become new creatures, and holy men, by their natural descent, or first birth, be it from whom it will; for all men are of one blood originally, and that is tainted with sin; nor by the will of fallen creatures, of corruptible men, themselves or others; but of water, and of the Spirit, of the grace of the Spirit of God, which is seed pure and incorruptible, having no mixture or taint of sin, nor any degree of pollution in it, and which remains so; nor can it be corrupted by all the wickedness there is in man's heart; nor by all the pollutions of the world, or temptations of Satan; and this seed is conveyed into the heart by the Spirit of God, in regeneration, and it contains all grace in it.

By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever] For the incorruptible seed, and the ever-living and abiding word, are two distinct things; though interpreters generally confound them: and by the word of God, is either meant the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; who is concerned in regeneration as well as the Father and the Spirit; by whose resurrection, and in consequence of it, the elect of God are begotten again; and who, as the Word, is able to build up all the sanctified ones; and give them the inheritance they are born heirs unto: or the Gospel, the word of truth, which is made use of as a means of begetting souls again; and the rather, since it seems to be so interpreted, *Ps.* 25. the phrases, *which liveth and abideth for ever*, may be either read in connection only with God, and as descriptive of him, who is the living God, is from everlasting to everlasting, in distinction from idols; and here added to shew that he can give power and efficacy to his word, to regenerate and quicken, and will continue to preserve it, and make it useful to all his saving purposes; so Jarchi explains the passage in *Isaiah* xl. 8. after referred to, *the word of our God shall stand for ever*; "because he lives and abides," and it is in his power to confirm it; therefore

"it follows, *O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain*; for because "he lives for ever, this promise is published." Or else with the word of God, and is true both of Christ, and of the Gospel. Christ is the Word which lives; in him, as such, is life; he has life in himself as God, as man, and as mediator; and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and abides for ever in his person, without any change; and in his offices, and grace, and righteousness; he abides a priest continually, has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession, and of his kingdom there is no end: the same is said of the *Messiah*, or Word of God, in the Chaldee paraphrase on *Hosea* xi. 9. *I am God, my word abideth for ever*; compare *John* xii. 34. The Gospel also may be said to live, in opposition to the Law, which is the killing letter; and because it points out the way of life and salvation to sinners; and is a means of quickening dead sinners, and of ingenerating that faith by which men live on Christ; and of revealing to them that righteousness which is unto justification of life; and of supporting and maintaining spiritual life in them; and of reviving drooping saints; the Syriac version renders it, "the living word of God:" and it remains, and will abide; all its promises, blessings, doctrines, and ordinances are lasting; it will continue in the world until all the elect of God are gathered in, until the second coming of Christ, and to the end of the world; notwithstanding all the persecutions of men, and cunning craft of false teachers, and all the ridicule and contempt it is treated with by mockers and scoffers; and will abide in the effects of it, in the hearts of the saints, to all eternity.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

For all flesh is as grass] All men, as born of corruptible seed, are frail, mortal, and perishing; they spring up like grass, and look beautiful for a while, but are very weak and tender, and in a little time they are cut down by death and wither away; and whilst they live, are, in a good measure, nothing but grass in another form; the substance of their life is greatly by it; what is the flesh they eat, but grass turned into it? And this mortality is not only the case of wicked men; as the Jews (*l*) interpret the word, but of good men; even

(*l*) Pirke Abot, c. 3. §. 1. & Bartenora in *ibid.* Zohar in *Exod.* fol. 62. 1. & 78. 2.

(*l*) Targum, Jarchi & Kimchi in *Is.* xl. 8.

even of the prophets, and preachers of the Gospel; and yet the word of God spoken by them continues for ever: the passage referred to, is in *Isaiah* xl. 6—8.

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass] All outward things which are in esteem with men, and render them glorious to one another, as riches, honour, wisdom, strength, external righteousness, holiness, and goodness; all which are fading and transitory, like the flower of the field; but the Gospel continues, and reveals durable riches and honour with Christ, and true wisdom and strength with him, and spiritual knowledge, in comparison of which all things are dross and dung; and an everlasting righteousness, and true holiness in him: some have thought, respect may be had to the legal dispensation, and to all the glory and stateliness and goodliness of the worship and ordinances of it, which were to endure but for a time, and are now removed; and the Gospel-dispensation has taken place of them, which will continue to the end of the world.

The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away] And so fading are all the above things.

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever] Though men die, and ministers of the word too, and every thing in the world is uncertain, unstable, fleeting, and passing away, and whatever change has been in the ordinances of divine service; yet the word of the Lord, the Gospel of Christ, is settled for ever, and will never pass away.

And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you] This is the apostle's application of the passage in *Isaiah*, shewing that the word of the Lord there, is the same with the Gospel preached by him and the other apostles at that present time; and is no other than that good tidings Zion is said to bring; see *Isaiah* xl. 9. the self-same Gospel the prophet *Isaiah* preached, the apostles did, though with greater clearness, and more success; see *Rom.* x. 8, 16.

CH A P. II.

This chapter consists of exhortations in general, to a holy life; and in particular, to obedience to superiors. It begins with an exhortation to lay aside various vices, which were unbecoming regenerate persons, *1.* and agreeable to their character, as new-born babes, to express a de-

fire after the Gospel, which is commended from its nature, being comparable to milk; and from its quality, being reasonable, sincere, and unmixed; and from the end and usefulness of it, a spiritual growth; and the argument engaging to such a desire, is the experience they had of the grace of Christ in it, *2, 3.* whose excellency is declared under the metaphor of a stone, said to be living, to be chosen of God, and precious to him, though rejected by men; to whom the saints are encouraged to come, as lively stones built up, a spiritual house, for the exercise of the holy office of the priesthood, by offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ, *4, 5.* and that Christ is such a precious stone, is proved from *Isaiah* xxviii. 16. and not only to God, but to all them that believe; though to them that believe not, he is the stone of rejection, stumbling and offence; to stumble at which, and the doctrine of it, through disobedience, they were of old appointed by God, *6—8.* but the character of the persons the apostle writes to, was very different, quite the reverse; being chosen, and called, and manifestly the people of God, and sharing in his grace and mercy, *9, 10.* and these he exhorts, suitable to their state and condition, to abstain from sin, as an enemy to their souls, and to live an honest life and conversation among the Gentiles, that they, instead of speaking evil of them, might, by beholding their good works, glorify God, *11, 12.* And particularly he exhorts them to obedience to civil magistrates both superior and inferior; partly from the author of them, they being of the Lord; and partly from the usefulness of them to punish wicked men, and to encourage good men; and also from its being the will of God, by such obedience to silence the cavils of foolish men, *13—15.* And whereas it might be objected, that they were made free by Christ, and therefore should not be the servants of men: it is granted that they were free; but then it is denied, that they should use their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness; and besides, it should be observed, that they were the servants of God, and therefore ought to do what he enjoined them; and, among other things, yield obedience to civil magistrates, *16.* And to this purpose are various exhortations in *17.* and another particular one is added, which is to servants, to be subject to their masters, and fear them, whether they be good or bad, *18.* and then he comforts such that had bad masters, and encourages them to bear the injuries they received from them patiently; because so to do was grateful to God, and

and acceptable in his sight; because so to do was grateful to God, and acceptable in his sight; and because they were called unto it by him; and because of the example Christ had left them in suffering for them, *†*. 19—21. And this is further urged from the character of Christ, who was without sin, and yet suffered, and from his conduct, who, when reviled, made no return, but left his cause with God, *†*. 22, 23. which leads on the apostle to take notice of the nature of Christ's sufferings in his body on the cross, and the ends of them, which were expiation of sin, healing diseases, and holiness of life, as a consequent thereof, *†*. 24. previous to which is conversion, which is illustrated by the former state and condition men are in, being as sheep going astray; and by their present one, being returned to Christ, the shepherd and bishop of souls, *†*. 25.

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

Wherefore laying aside all malice] Since the persons the apostle writes to were born again, and therefore ought to love one another, he exhorts them to the disuse of such vices as were disagreeable to their character as regenerate men, and, contrary to brotherly love; he dissuades them from them, and advises to lay them aside, either as weights and burdens, which it was not fit for new-born babes to carry; see *Heb. xii. 1.* or rather as old worn-out clothes, as filthy rags, which should be put off, laid by, and never used more, being what were very unsuitable to their character and profession to wear: the metaphor is the same as in *Eph. iv. 22.* and *Col. iii. 8, 9.* and the first he mentions is *malice*; to live in which is a mark of an unregenerate man, and very unbecoming such who are born again; and is not consistent with the relation of brethren, and character of children, or new-born babes, who are without malice, and do not bear and retain it: all of this is to be laid aside, towards all persons whatever, and in every shape, and in every instance of it.

And all guile] Fraud, or deceit, in words or actions; and which should not be found, and appear in any form, in Israelites indeed, in brethren, in the children of God; who ought not to lie one to another, or defraud each other, nor express that with their lips which they have not in their hearts; which babes are free from, and so should babes in Christ.

And hypocrisies] Both to God and men: hypocrisy to God is, when persons profess that which

they have not, as love to God, faith in Christ, zeal for religion, fervent devotion, and sincerity in the worship of God; and do all they do to be seen of men, and appear outwardly righteous, and yet are full of all manner of iniquity: hypocrisy to men is, pretence of friendship, loving in word and tongue only, speaking peaceably with the mouth, but in heart laying wait; a sin to be abhorred and detested by one that is born from above; and is contrary to that integrity, simplicity, and sincerity of heart which become regenerate persons, the children of God, and brethren one of another.

And envies] At each others happiness and prosperity, riches, honours, gifts temporal or spiritual; for such are works of the flesh, shew men to be carnal, are unbecoming regenerated persons, and contrary to the exercise of christian charity, or love, which envieth not the welfare of others, either respecting body, soul, or estate.

And all evil speakings] Backbitings, whisperings, detractions, hurting one another's characters by inuendos, false charges, and evil surmises; which is not acting like men that are made new creatures, and are partakers of the divine nature, nor like brethren, or as Christ's little ones, and who are of God, begotten again to be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

2 As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

As new-born babes] The Syriac version renders it, "be ye simple as infants;" and as if it was a distinct exhortation of itself, and from that which follows; though it seems rather to be descriptive of the persons spoken to, and a character of them, under which the apostle addresses them; which carries in it a reason strengthening the exhortation after given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible seed by the word of God, and that they were just, or lately born; and which is to be understood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with respect to others who were young men, or fathers; but that, comparatively speaking, those that had been of the longest standing were but as it were newly born, it being at most but a few years since they were called by grace: and they were as *babes*, not on account of their want of knowledge, or unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; or of non-proficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dullness, backwardness, and imperfection; or because of their

incapacity in taking it, and digesting the strong meat and sublimer doctrines of the Gospel; or for their instability and simplicity, being easily deceived and beguiled; not for their weakness in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their insufficiency to defend, or provide for themselves; but because of their harmlessness and innocence, meekness and humility; and for the sincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profession. The profelytes to the Jews religion are often said (m) to be כמטן שנוטר דמי "as an infant just born, or a new-born babe;" to which the allusion may here be made.

Desire the sincere milk of the word] This is not a declaration that these new-born souls did do so, though that might be true, but an exhortation to them so to do, as it became them: by the *sincere milk of the word*, is meant the Gospel, even the whole of it, and not as elsewhere, the more plain and easy truths of it; which is compared to milk, for its purity in itself, for every word of God is pure; and for its purifying nature, as used by the Spirit of God; and for its sweetness and agreeable taste to a regenerate man; and because easy of digestion to a spiritual one; and because it is nutritive to him, by it he is nourished up unto eternal life; and because, as milk is of a cooling nature, so the Gospel is a means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, of allaying those inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation raised in the conscience of a sinner by the law; and because as milk, medicinally used, is a restorative in consumptive disorders, so the Gospel is not only the means of helping a declining person, and who is wasted and consumed by sin, but even of quickening such as are dead in sin; it is the savour of life unto life. The Jewish writers speak of חלב של תורה "the milk of the law (n)," of which they generally interpret (o) the passage in *Isa.* lv. 1. but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or *rational milk*; not that the Gospel is a scheme, according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, "the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual;" and it is *sincere*; without mix-

ture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, Jews or heretics: or *without deceit*; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it. Now, this it becomes regenerate persons to *desire*; and vehemently long after, as a new-born babe does after its mother's milk; for the Gospel is that to one that is born again, as the breast is to a babe: desire after it supposes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and esteem for it, even above necessary food, and at times, an hungry and thirsting after it, an impatient longing for, and desire of it; when such souls will labour after it, and diligently observe and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere the seasons of meeting with it return; for it is suitable food for them, savoury food, such as their souls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation and of such a desire, and of feeding on the words of faith and sound doctrine, is,

That ye may grow thereby] Regenerate persons are not at their full growth at once; they are first children, then young men, and then fathers in Christ; the Gospel is appointed as a means of their spiritual growth, and by the blessing of God becomes so, and which they find to be so by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is desirable on this account, for the increase of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in an experience of spiritual strength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profession, but in the fruits of grace, righteousness, and holiness. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "unto salvation;" that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Christ, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and in the possession of that salvation he has obtained for them.

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Reference is had to *Psalms* xxxiv. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good*; and the Syriac version here adds, "if ye have seen:" by *the Lord*, is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the following words shew, who is gracious, and amiable, and lovely in his person; who has a fulness of grace in him for his people; has displayed his grace towards them, in engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, obeying, suffering, and dying

(m) T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 43. 2. & 61. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon Hilch. Issur: Bia, c. 14. § 11. & Eduth, c. 13. § 2.

(n) Jarchi in Cant. v. 12. (o) Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in *Isa.* lv. 1. Ababinet, Malhamis Jesus, fol. 26. 1.

dying in their stead; he is gracious in his word and promises, truths and ordinances, and in all his offices and relations; and regenerate persons have tasted that he is so: an unregenerate man has no spiritual taste; his taste is vitiated by sin, and not being changed, sin is a sweet morsel in his mouth, and he disrelishes every thing that is spiritual; but one that is born again, savours the things of the Spirit of God; sin is exceeding sinful to him, and Christ exceeding precious; he, and his fruit, his promises, and blessings of grace, his word and ordinances, are sweet unto his taste: and the taste he has is not a mere superficial one, such as hypocrites may have of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but such a taste of Christ, and of his grace, as by a true faith to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and so have everlasting life; such have a saving and experimental knowledge of Christ, an application of him and his saving benefits to them, a revelation of him in them, so that they find and feel that he dwells in them, and they in him; such receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace, and live by faith upon him, and receive nourishment from him; and of this the apostle made no doubt concerning these persons, but took it for granted that they had had such tastes of Christ, and therefore could not but desire the Gospel, which is a revelation of Christ, and sets forth the glory of his person, and the riches of his grace: and whereas, such as have truly tasted of his grace, cannot but desire to have more, and fresh tastes of it; where should they have them, but in his word and ordinances? And therefore would they grow in grace, and know more of Christ, and taste more of his goodness, it is their interest, as it is their spiritual nature, to desire the Gospel, in the purity and sincerity of it.

4 To whom coming, *as unto a living stone*, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and precious*,

To whom coming, as unto a living stone] Christ here, as often elsewhere, is compared to a *stone*; and Peter, by the use of this metaphor, shews, that he is not the rock, but Christ is the rock on which the church is built, and he is the foundation-stone on which every believer is laid; and it is chiefly with respect to the usefulness of a stone in building, that Christ is compared to one, who is the foundation and corner-stone, as well as for strength and duration: and he is called a *living* one, because he has life in himself, as God, as mediator, and as man; and communicates life to others, as natural life to all creatures, and spiritual and eternal life to his people, whose great

privilege it is to come to him: and by *coming* to him is meant, believing in him; and it does not design the first act of faith on Christ, or a soul's first coming to Christ, but an after and continued exercise of faith on him; and it supposes Christ to be come at, notwithstanding he is in heaven, and saints on earth, for their faith and hope can enter into, and reach him within the veil, and notwithstanding their many transgressions and backslidings; it supposes life in them, or they could not come; and a sense of their need of him, of his righteousness to justify them, of his blood for pardon and cleansing, of his fulness to supply their want, of food, rest, peace, comfort, and salvation in him; and a persuasion of his ability and willingness to relieve them: and they are encouraged to come to him under the above considerations, as a stone, a foundation-stone; believing that he is laid as a foundation, and that he is the only foundation, and therefore they lay the whole stress of their salvation, and build all their hopes of happiness on him; and as a living stone, deriving grace, life, and strength from him; exercising faith on him for all the mercies, blessings, and comforts of a spiritual life, and looking to his mercy for eternal life.

Disallowed indeed of men] By the Jewish builders, high priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and the body and bulk of that nation; who rejected him as the Messiah and stone of Israel, refused him as a foundation-stone, and left him out of the building; and laid another foundation, even their own works of righteousness, on which sandy foundation they built themselves, and directed others to do so likewise; and set him at nought as a living stone, would not come to him for life, but sought it in the law, the killing letter, and among their dead works; but though Christ was thus disallowed and disesteemed of by men, yet was he highly valued and esteemed by God.

But chosen of God, and precious] His human nature was *chosen* from among, and above all other individuals of mankind, to be united to the Son of God; as God-man and mediator, he was chosen to that high office, to be the head of the church, and the saviour of the body; to be the foundation in the spiritual building, and to be the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life, to as many as were given him. Moreover, this phrase denotes the super-excellency of Christ to angels and men, in the account of God; being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the Son of his love, in whom he was always well-pleased, and in whom he took infinite delight, considered both as his Son, and the surety of his people; and to whom he was *precious*, and

and by him highly honoured, made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves, being set down at God's right hand, and a name given him above every name in this world or that to come; and who is precious to the saints too, more so than rubies, or any precious stones, or any thing or creature whatever; his person is precious, and so are his name, his blood, his righteousness, his truths, his ordinances, and his people.

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Ye also, as lively stones] Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where, both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building; and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called *lively*, or *living stones*; the Spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life. It was usual with poets and philosophers to call stones, as they lie in the quarry, before they are taken out of it, *living ones*: so Virgil (*p*), describing the seats of the nymphs, says, *intus aquæ dulces vivoque sedilia saxo, nympharum domus*, &c. but here the apostle calls such living stones, who were taken out from among the rest: the stones which Deucalion and Pyrrha cast over their heads, after the flood, are called (*q*), *ζωοδυντες λιθοι*, "quickened stones;" they becoming men, as the fable says.

Are built up a spiritual house] These living stones being laid, and cemented together in a Gospel-church-state, become the house of God in a spiritual sense, in distinction from the material house of the tabernacle, and temple of old, to which the allusion is; and which is built up an habitation for God by the Spirit, and is made up of spiritual men; such as have the Spirit of God, and favour the things of the Spirit, and worship God in spirit and in truth; among whom spiritual services are performed, as prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administering or-

dinances. Some read these words in the imperative, as an exhortation, "be ye built up as lively stones; and be ye spiritual temples and holy priests," as the Syriac version. A synagogue with the Jews is called, *בית מדרש* "a spiritual house (*r*);" and so is the third temple, which the Jews expect in the times of the Messiah; of which one of their writers (*s*) thus says: "It is known from the ancient wise men, that the future redemption with which shall be the third, *בית מדרש* "spiritual sanctuary," is the work of God, and which has been already done, and is what the apostle means here, the church, under the Gospel-dispensation, or the Gospel-church-state, in opposition to the worldly sanctuary, and carnal worship of the Jews.

An holy priesthood] In allusion to the priests under the law, who were set apart and sanctified for that office; but now under the Gospel, all the saints are priests unto God, and are all appointed and directed

To offer up spiritual sacrifices] Their whole selves, souls, and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice; their prayers, and praises, and all good works done in faith, and from love, and to the glory of God; particularly acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints; these are called *spiritual* in distinction from legal sacrifices, and because offered in a spiritual manner, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and with their spirits. So the Jews speak of spiritual sacrifices, as distinct from material ones: "The intellectual sacrifice, they say (*t*), is before the material sacrifices, both in time and excellency.—Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the earth, and behold the intellectual attention did not agree with it, which is, *הקרבן רומני* "the spiritual sacrifice." Now such are

Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ] Through whom they are offered up; for it is through him the saints have access to God, present themselves to him, and their services; and both persons and services are only accepted in Christ, and for his sake, and in virtue of his sacrifice, which is always of a sweet-smelling savour to God.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture] Isa. xxviii. 16. This is produced as a proof of the

(*r*) Neve Shalom apud Capitor, fol. 14. 1.

(*s*) R. Alshech

in Hagg. ii. 7—10.

(*t*) Neve Shalom apud Capitor, fol. 88. 2. Vid. Reziel. fol. 33. 1.

(*p*) *Æneid* l. 1.

(*q*) *Rustathus* in *Homer*, *Iliad*, 1.

the excellency of Christ, as compared to a stone; and of his usefulness in the spiritual building; and of his being chosen of God, and precious, though rejected by men; and of the happiness, comfort, and safety of those that believe in him. That this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is the sense of some of the Jewish writers: the Targum on it applies it to a mighty king; it does not mention the king Messiah, as Galatinus (u) cites it; but Jarchi expressly names him, and interprets it of him.

Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious] Christ is here called a *chief corner-stone*; as in *Ephesians* ii. 20. because he not only adorns and strengthens the building, but unites the parts, and keeps them together, even all the saints, Jews or Gentiles, in all ages and places, whether in heaven or earth; and he, as such, is chosen of God for that purpose, and is precious both to God and man on that account; and is a stone, not of mens laying, but of God's laying, in his council, covenant, promises, and prophecies, in the mission of him into this world, and in the Gospel-ministry; the place where he is laid is in Sion, the Gospel-church, of which he is both the foundation and corner-stone: and this account is introduced with a *behold*, it being something very wonderful, and worthy of attention: to which is added,

And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded] Or *ashamed* of the foundation and corner-stone Christ, nor of his faith in him; and he shall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that to come; he shall have confidence before Christ, and not be ashamed at his coming; he shall be safe now, being laid on this stone; nor shall he be removed from it, or intimidated by any enemy, so as to flee from it; nor shall he *make haste*, as it is in *Isaiab* xxviii. 16. to lay another foundation; and he shall be found upon this hereafter; so that his person and state will be safe, though many of his works may be burnt up.

7. Unto you therefore which believe *he is precious*: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious] And such are not all they that can say their creed, or give their assent to the articles of it; nor all that believe a divine revelation, and that the scriptures are the word of God, and give credit to all

that is contained in the sacred oracles; or who believe the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; as that there is one God; that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; that Christ is the Son of God, and truly God; that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he is the Messiah; is become incarnate, has obeyed, suffered, and died for men, and is the Saviour of them; that he rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, intercedes for his people, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; together with all other truths which arise from, depend upon, and are connected with these; nor all that say they believe, or profess to do so; but such who have seen themselves lost and undone by sin, their need of a Saviour, and Christ as the only one; who have seen the Son, the beauty of his person, the fulness of his grace, and the necessity and suitableness of salvation by him; who have beheld him as able to save them, as every way proper for them, and desirable by them, for faith is a sight of Christ; who also come to him under the drawings of efficacious grace, as perishing sinners, encouraged by his invitations and declarations, and venture on him; who likewise lay hold upon him, as their Saviour, and will have no other; give up themselves to him, and commit their all into his hands; who rely and stay themselves upon him, trust him with all they have, and for all they want, expecting grace and glory from him; who live upon him, and walk on in him, go on believing in him, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Now to these, in proof of what is asserted in the above passage out of *Isaiab*, Christ is *precious*; he is so in all his names and titles, as *Immanuel*, "God with us," and that cluster of them in *Isa.* ix. 6. and particularly his name *Jesus*, a Saviour, which is as ointment poured forth, and draws the love of believers to him; and so he is in both his natures, divine and human; the perfections of Deity in him, his being in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, render him very amiable in the view of believers; who rightly conclude from hence, that all he has done, and does, must answer the purposes for which they are designed; and his having a perfect human nature, like to theirs, excepting sin, in which he wrought salvation for them on earth, and is now glorified in heaven, makes him a delightful object to them: he is also precious to them in all his offices; in his priestly office, his blood is precious, as it must needs be, since by it they are purchased and redeemed; they are justified and sanctified by it; through it they have the forgiveness of sin, and boldness

(u) De Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 22.

boldness to enter into the holiest of all: his righteousness is precious to them, it being the best robe, the wedding-garment, fine linen, clean and white, every way suitable to them, and answerable to the demands of the law; is pure, perfect, and everlasting; that by which they are justified from all things, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and intitles them to eternal life. His sacrifice is precious, of a sweet-smelling savour to them, as well as to God; by which their sins are fully expiated, put, and taken away; full satisfaction being made for them, and they themselves thereby perfected for ever. And so he is in his prophetic office. His word is precious, and all the truths of the Gospel, which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; the promises of it are exceeding great and precious, being suited to the cases of all believers: and he is also precious in his kingly office; his commands are not grievous; his yoke is easy, and burden light; believers love his commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold, and esteem his precepts concerning all things to be right, and delight in his ways and ordinances: moreover, he is precious to them in all his relations, as he is the head of eminence and influence, their kind and loving Husband, their everlasting Father, their affectionate Brother, and faithful Friend; his whole person, in every view, is precious to them that believe; the church of Christ, the members of his body, the sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, in these is all the delight of saints; every thing that is in Christ, that is of him, or belongs to him, is precious to such souls: some read the words, "to you therefore that believe, he is honour;" as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and so the word is rendered in *Romans* xiii. 7. he is both an honour to them, that they are related to him; and he is honoured by them, by believing in him, and obeying him; and he is the cause of all their true honour, both in this and the other world. The Syriac version renders it, "to you therefore is this honour given;" namely, that such a stone is laid, and that they were built upon it, and should not be confounded, or ashamed, either here or hereafter; connecting the words with the preceding. The Septuagint use the word the apostle here does, in *Isa.* xi. 10. where it is prophesied of the Messiah, that his rest shall be glorious; they render it τιμη, "honour, or precious." The Jewish writers have adopted the word נֶפֶשׁ into their language, and use it for profit, and gain (*w*); in which sense it is applicable to Christ, who is gain to believers, both in life and in death; they being blessed with all spi-

ritual blessings in him, and he being all in all to them: and also they use it, as denoting the intrinsic price and value of any thing (*x*), and which is a right sense of the word; and to believers the price of Wisdom, or Christ, is far above rubies, and all the things that can be desired; to them he is precious as a stone, as a foundation and corner-stone, and more precious than the most precious stones or things in nature; this he is to them that believe: next follows, in this and the other verse, the account of what he is to them that believe not.

But unto them which be disobedient] Who are unperfuadable, unbelieving, and are children of disobedience; who neither obey God and his righteous law, nor Christ and his Gospel.

The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner] Reference is manifestly had to *Psalms* cxviii. 22. which is a passage that clearly belongs to the Messiah, and which is suggested by Christ himself, in *Matt.* xxi. 42. see the note there; and is by our apostle, in *Acts* iv. 11, 12. applied unto him: by the builders, are meant the rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastical, and especially the latter, the scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; who set up for builders of the church of God, but were miserable ones; they built themselves, and taught others to build, on the observances of the ceremonial law; and the traditions of the elders; on their carnal privileges, and moral righteousness; and these disallowed of Christ in the building, rejected him as the Messiah, refused him as the Saviour and Redeemer, and set him at nought; had him in the utmost derision, and reckoned him as a worm, and no man; but to their great mortification, he is not only laid and retained as the foundation and corner-stone, but made the head of the building, and is exalted at God's right hand above angels and men; he is the head of the body, the church; he is higher than the kings of the earth, and angels are subject to him.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence] The apostle alludes to *Isaiah* viii. 14. and which is a prophecy of the Messiah; see the note on *Romans* ix. 33. and had its accomplishment in the unbelieving and disobedient Jews; who stumbled

(w) Targum in *Ethier* iii. 8. & v. 13. & vii. 4.

(x) Targum Hierosol. in *Gen.* xxi. 33. Targum Jon. in *Gen.* xxiii. 15. Targum in *Prov.* xxi. 30. *Bereishit Rabba*, §. 2. fol. 2, 3. & §. xi. fol. 9. 3.

at his birth and parentage; at the manner of his birth, being born of a virgin; at the meanness of his parents, his supposed father being a carpenter, and his mother, Mary, a poor woman, when they expected the Messiah would have sprung from some rich and noble family; and at the place of his birth, which they imagined was Galilee, from his education and conversation there; they stumbled also at his education, and could not conceive how he should know letters, and from whence he should have his wisdom, having never been trained up in any of their schools and academies, or at the feet of any of their Doctors and Rabbins; but, on the other hand, was brought up and employed in the trade of a carpenter: they stumbled at his outward meanness and poverty, when they expected the Messiah would be a rich, powerful, and glorious monarch; and so at the obscurity of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation; when they dreamt of an earthly and temporal one, which should be set up in great splendor and glory: and they stumbled likewise at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him, being the poorer sort of the people, and the more illiterate, and also such who had been very profane and wicked, as publicans and harlots; moreover, they stumbled at his ministry, at the doctrine he preached, particularly at the doctrine of his divinity, and of spiritual communion with him, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and at the doctrines of distinguishing grace; and so at his miracles, by which he confirmed his mission and ministry, some of these being wrought on the sabbath-day, and others they imputed to diabolical influence and assistance: in a word, they stumbled at his death, having imbibed a notion that Christ abideth for ever, and especially at the manner of it, the death of the cross; wherefore the preaching of Christ crucified, always was, and still is, a stumbling-block unto them.

Even to them which stumble at the word] Either the essential Word, Christ Jesus, as before; or rather at the doctrine of the Gospel, at that part of it which respects a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; because their carnal reason could not comprehend it, and they refused to submit to revelation, and to receive the witness of God, which is greater than that of men; and at that part of it, which regards the Deity of Christ, and that for this reason, because he was a man; and in order to enervate the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and fearing too much honour should be given to him; and also at that part of the word which concerns the distinguishing grace of God, as eternal personal election,

VOL. V.

particular redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion; against which the carnal mind of man is continually cavilling and replying, and in so doing, against God himself, charging him with cruelty, injustice, and insincerity; and particularly at that part of the word which holds forth the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ; this was the grand stumbling-block of the Jews, who sought for righteousness, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of the law, and of themselves, and their own righteousness, of which they had an overweening opinion.

Being disobedient] To the Gospel revelation, and unwilling to submit their carnal reason to it; this is the source and cause of their stumbling at Christ and his Gospel: it is worth while to compare this with the Chaldee paraphrase of *Isaiah* viii. 14. which passage is here referred to; and the paraphrase of it runs thus; "If ye obey not, his word shall be among you for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and for a rock of offence to both houses of the princes of Israel, and for destruction and offence to those who are divided upon the house of Judah, &c."

Whereunto also they were appointed] Both to stumble at the word of the Gospel, and at Christ, the sum and substance of it, he being set in the counsel and purpose of God, as for the rising of some, so, for the stumbling and falling of others; and also to that disobedience and infidelity which was the cause of their stumbling; for as there are some whom God has appointed and fore-ordained to believe in Christ, and on whom he has determined to bestow true faith in him, and who have it as a pure gift, in consequence of such appointment; so there are others, whom he has determined to leave in that disobedience and infidelity, into which the fall brought and concluded them, through which they stumble at Christ, and his word, and in consequence thereof justly perish: but this is not the case of all; there are some who are the objects of distinguishing grace and favour, and who are described in the following verse.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

But ye are a chosen generation] Or kindred; the phrase is to be seen in the Septuagint, on *Isaiah* xliii. 20. to which, and the following verse, the apostle refers here, and in another part of this

H h

text.

text. The allusion is throughout to the people of Israel in general, who, in the external way, were all that is here said; but was only true in a spiritual sense, of such as were chosen and called among the Jews: and who were a *generation* or *kindred*; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible seed born again; and were akin to God, he being their Father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their new birth; and also akin to Christ, he being their head, husband, father, and brother, and they his members, spouse, children, and brethren; and to the saints, being of the same household and family, in heaven and in earth; having the same Father, Lord, Spirit, Faith, Baptism, and they all brethren: and they were a *chosen* generation or kindred; being famous, and in high esteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having chosen them above all kindreds, tongues, people, and nations, and that from all eternity; and of his own sovereign good-will and pleasure, and not on account of their faith, holiness, and good works; and to special benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and sanctification, and to salvation and eternal life; just as Israel, as a nation, were chosen above all others, because of the love of God to them, and for no other reason, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the apostle mentions this character first, because God's eternal election is the source and spring of all spiritual blessings, which provides and secures them; and according to which they are bestowed, and with which they are inseparably connected.

A royal priesthood] Referring to *Exodus* xix. 6. where the Israelites are called, a *kingdom of priests*; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, "kings priests;" see *Rev.* i. 6. a character which one of the Jewish commentators says (y), shall return to the Jews לעתיד לבוא "in time to come;" and well agrees with all the people of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are all of them *kings*, through their relation to Christ; and at the present time have a kingdom, which cannot be moved or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Gospel-dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have also the kingdom of grace set up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle implanted in them; which lies not in any thing external, but in righteousness and true holiness, in inward peace, and spiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and

the world; and the riches of kings, being possessed of the riches of grace now, and intitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness; they sit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life-guards and ministering-spirits to them; and hereafter they shall reign with Christ on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and after that, for ever; being raised up from a low estate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteousness, and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs. And they are *priests*, as well as kings; being made so by Christ, and through his priestly office; are anointed with the holy Ghost, and sanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Christ their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and are enabled and assisted to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies also, and even their lives, when called to it. The allusion is to the kingdom and priesthood being formerly together, and which met in Christ, *Zach.* vi. 13. and in his people. The Jews were wont to call the priestly dignity and office, כתר כהונה "the crown of the priesthood (z)."

An holy nation] Referring to the same place in *Exodus* xix. 6. where the Israelites are so called, being separated by God from other nations, and legally and externally sanctified by him; as all the true Israel of God are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in eternal election, to real and perfect holiness; and are sanctified or cleansed from sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holiness wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and conversations.

A peculiar people] As the Israelites are called a *peculiar treasure*, *Exod.* xix. 5. to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are chosen by him to be a special people above all others, and have peculiar blessings bestowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's כנזה his treasure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preserve and save them; they are a people for acquisition, purchase, and possession, as the words may be rendered; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchased for himself, with the precious blood of his

(y) Baal Hatturim in loc.

(z) Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 13. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 78. 3.

his Son; hence the Syriac version renders them, כְּנִשְׁתָּא פְּרִיקָא "a redeemed company;" the same with the church God has purchased with his blood, *Acts* xx. 28. and the purchased possession, *Eph.* i. 14. and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, *Tit.* ii. 14. the end of all which grace being bestowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is,

That ye should shew forth the praises of him] That is, God, who has chosen them into a spiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and priests, sanctified them by his Spirit, and redeemed them by his Son, as a peculiar people; all which laid them under obligation to shew forth with their lips, and in their lives and conversations, his virtues; we read, *praises*; and so the Syriac version; that is, the power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, displayed in the above instances: the apostle seems to have his eye on *Isaiah* xliii. 21. where the Septuagint use the same word for *praise*, as here: next follows a periphrasis of God, and in it an argument, or reason for speaking of his virtues, and shewing forth his praise.

Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light] Which is to be understood, not of an external call by the ministry of the word only; for many are called in this sense, who are not chosen, redeemed, and sanctified; but of an internal, special, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the Spirit and grace of God: and this is, *out of darkness*; out of the darkness of the law, under the former dispensation, which was as night, in comparison of the Gospel-day; and out of that darkness which the Jews were particularly in, in and about the coming of Christ, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the spirituality of the law; having lost all right notions of the Messiah, and the true sense of the scriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the scribes and Pharisees; out of this darkness, as well as what is common to men in a state of unregeneracy, having no sight of themselves, their sin, and misery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, and of salvation by him, and of the work of the Spirit upon the heart, they were called, *into his marvellous light*; by which they saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness, their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and astonishing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkness, and were darkness itself, should be made light in the Lord; and the ob-

jects they saw were amazing to them: every thing in a spiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; especially the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and also the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the surprizing love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the several parts of their salvation: it was with them; as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was shut up in a dungeon, where there was not the least crevice to let in the least degree of light, and should continue here till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noon-day, the sun shining in its full strength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, must strike him with wonder and surprise. The Syriac version renders it, "his most excellent light;" the apostle seems to refer to the form of praise and thanksgiving used by the Jews, at the time of the passover; who say (a), "We are bound to confess, to praise, to glorify, &c. him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; he hath brought us out of bondage to liberty; from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day, וּמִאֲפֵלִי לְאוֹר נְדִיב, and out of darkness into great light; and from subjection unto redemption." This was also part of their morning-prayer (b); "I confess before thee, O my God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into light." And it is to be observed, that the third Sephira, or number in the Jewish Cabalic tree, which answers to the third person in the Trinity, among other names, is called, *marvellous light* (c).

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Which in time were not a people] A *lo-ammi* being put upon them; see *Hosea* i. 9, 10. and chap. ii. 23. to which the apostle here refers: God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were, from eternity, his chosen people, and his covenant-people; and as such were given to Christ, and they became his people, and his care and charge; and he saved them by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and redeemed them to himself; a peculiar people; but then, before conversion, they are not a people formed by God for himself, and his praise; nor Christ's willing people, either

(a) M. Isa. Pefachim, c. 10. §. 5. Haggada Shel Pefach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. §. 5.
(b) T. Hieros. Berachot, c. 4. fol. 7. 1. (c) Cabala Denu-
data, par. 2, p. 8.

to be saved by him, or to serve him; nor are they, nor can they be truly known by themselves or others to be the people of God: the Syriac version gives the true sense of the phrase, by rendering it, "these who before were not *known*" "reckoned or accounted a people;" that is, by others.

But are now the people of God] Being regenerated, called, and sanctified, they are avouched by God to be his people; they have the witness of the Spirit to their spirits that they are the people of God; they can then claim their relation to God, and are known, acknowledged, and called the people of God, by others.

Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy] Being called formerly, *le-rubamah*, Hosea i. 6. and chap. ii. 23. which passages the apostle has in view: before conversion there is mercy in God's heart towards his elect, and so there is in the covenant of grace, and which was shewn in the provision of his Son, as a Saviour, in the mission of him, and redemption by him; but this is not manifested to them until they are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, and then they obtain mercy; having in their regeneration an evident display of the mercy of God towards them, and an application of his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of his Son, unto them.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Dearly beloved, I beseech you] The apostle, from characters of the saints, and which express their blessings and privileges with great beauty, propriety, and pertinency, passes to exhortations to duties; he addresses the saints under this affectionate appellation, *dearly beloved*, to express his great love to them, and to shew that what he was about to exhort them to sprung from sincere and hearty affection for them, and was with a view to their real good; nor does he in an authoritative way command, as he might have done, as an apostle, but, as a friend, he entreats and beseeches them.

As strangers and pilgrims] Not in a literal sense, though they were in a foreign country, in a strange land, and sojourners there, but in a spiritual and mystical sense; they were *strangers*, not to God and Christ, and to the Spirit, to themselves, to the saints, and to all that is good, as they had formerly been, but to the world, the men of it, and the things in it; and therefore it became them to separate from it, and not conform

to it; to abstain from all appearance of evil, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and they were *pilgrims*; whose habit is Christ and his righteousness; whose food is Christ and his fulness; whose staff is Christ and the promises: whose guide is the blessed Spirit; the place for which they are bound is heaven, the better country, where is their Father's house, their friends, and their inheritance; this world not being their country, nor their resting place, it became them to have their conversation in heaven, and to

Abstain from fleshly lusts] Which spring from the flesh, and are concerned about fleshly things, and are exercised in and by the members of the flesh, or body; hence, in the Syriac version, they are called, "the lusts of the body:" these are to be abstained from; not that the apostle thought that they could be without them; for whilst the saints are in the body, flesh, or corrupt nature will be in them, and the lusts thereof; but then these are not to be indulged, or provision to be made for them, to fulfil them; they are not to be obeyed and served, or lived unto, but to be denied and crucified, being unsuitable to the character of strangers and pilgrims; and also because of their hurtful and pernicious nature.

Which war against the soul] See *Romans vii.* 23. *James iv.* 1. *Gal.* vi. 13. These are enemies to the spiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the soul; and being of a man's household, and in his heart, are the worst enemies he has; and are to be treated as such, to be shunned and avoided, watched and guarded against, for though they cannot destroy the souls of true believers, they may bring much leanness upon them, and greatly distress them, and spoil them of their inward joy, and spiritual pleasure.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles] To have the conversation honest, is to provide things honest in the sight of men; to live and walk honestly before all; to do those things which are right and honest in the sight of God, and among men; to order the conversation aright, according to the law of God, which is a rule of walk, and conversation, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which was the more, and rather to be attended to, because these converted

Jews

Jews were among the Gentiles, that knew not God; idolaters, and unbelievers, profane sinners, who were watching for their halting, and that they might take an advantage against them, and the Gospel, and the religion they professed, from their conversations.

That, whereas they speak against you as evildoers] Charging them with the grossest immoralities, as the heathens did the christians in the first ages; which appears evidently from the apologies of Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and others; though it seems that the Jewish converts are here intended, who were accused by the Gentiles of seditious principles and practices, and of acting contrary to the laws of civil government, refusing to yield subjection to Gentile magistrates, and obedience to heathen masters; and hence the apostle, in some following verses, enlarges on those duties, and which he exhorts them to attend unto, that they might put to silence the ignorance of such foolish accusers: and that

They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation] Or "trial," or "examination," as the Syriac version renders it; which may be understood either of human or divine visitation; if of the former, then the sense is, let the saints attend to all the duties of civil life, that when heathen magistrates come to visit their several districts, and inquire and examine into the conduct of men, and seeing and finding that the christians behave well and orderly, instead of persecuting them, they will bless God, that they are such good subjects; if of divine visitation, which seems most likely, this must either design a visitation by way of judgment, or of mercy; for as the Jews say (ד) there is תְּקוּיָה "a visitation for good," and "a visitation for evil:" God sometimes visits in a way of punishment for sin, and sometimes in a way of grace, for the good and welfare of men; and then the sense is, that when wicked men take notice of, and observe the good works of the saints, their civil, honest, and orderly conversation, they shall glorify God on that account, who has enabled them to perform them; and acknowledge the goodness of them, and the wrong judgment they have passed upon them, and the ill measure they have measured out to them; and this will be, either when God visits them in a way of wrath, as at the day of judgment, or at the time of some temporal calamity, before, or when he visits them in a way of mercy, calls them by his grace, and effectually works upon them by his Spirit: the

the same argument for the performance of good works is used by Christ in *Matthew* v. 16.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man] Or, "to every human creation, or creature:" not "to all the sons of men," as the Syriac version renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are some that are in such stations and circumstances, that they are not to be submitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: so, kings are not to submit to their subjects, nor are parents to be subject to their children, nor husbands to their wives, nor masters to their servants, which would be preposterous; but submission is limited and restrained to persons in such a place and situation: the human creature, or creation, here designs the Gentiles, who are elsewhere called "the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven," *Rom.* viii. 19—22. *Mark* xvi. 15. *Col.* i. 23. and particularly heathen magistrates, styled creation, or creature; not as men, for all men as such, are creatures; but as magistrates, being created, constituted, and appointed such, and installed into, and invested with such an office: and human; not only because they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magistrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but because they were created and placed in such a station by men; though government itself is of God, is a divine institution, yet this and that particular form of government, is of man; and especially the forms of government among the Gentiles, were human; and are here so called, in distinction from the form of government among the Jews, which was, a Theocracy, and was divine; wherefore the Jews, and so these converted ones, scrupled yielding obedience to heathen magistrates; on which account they were spoken against, as evil-doers: hence the apostle, in the first place, and as a principal part of their honest conversation among the Gentiles, exhorts them to submission to civil magistrates, though they were creatures of men; and to every one of them, though a Gentile, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges,

For the Lord's sake] For the sake of Christ Jesus the Lord, because of his command, who ordered to give Cesar the things that are Cesar's; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the sake of his honour and glory who was ill thought and spoken

of by the Gentiles, because of the disregard of the converted Jews to their magistrates; and which served to prejudice them against Christ and his Gospel, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "For God's sake;" because civil government is of God; magistracy is of divine appointment; the powers that be, are ordained of God, though this or the other form is of man's prescription: it is the command of God that magistrates should be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are submitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwise, not man, but God, is to be obeyed.

Whether it be to the king] To Cesar, the Roman emperor; and the then reigning one, seems to be Nero, who though a wicked man, was to be submitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the supreme government of a nation: the Syriac version reads it in the plural number, "to kings;" and though the name of king was odious to the Romans, from the times of Tarquin, nor did they call their chief governor or governors by this name, yet other nations did; see *John* xix. 15. and subjection was to be yielded to him,

As supreme] For the sake, and in consideration of his being in so high and exalted a station, having the supreme power and government of the people in his hands. The Syriac version renders it, "because of their power;" and the Arabic version, "because of his power;" and the Ethiopic version, "because all things are his;" the Roman emperors were absolute monarchs; see *Romans* xiii. 1.

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Or unto governors] Inferior magistrates, such as were under the Roman emperor; as proconsuls, procurators, &c. such as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, who had under the emperor the government of particular nations, provinces, and cities.

As unto them that are sent by him] Either by the king, the Roman emperor, by whom they were sent, from whom they received their commission, and derived their authority, under whom they acted, and to whom they were accountable; or by God, by whom they are ordained, and whose ministers they are, and for the ends hereafter mentioned; so that this contains an argu-

ment, or reason, why they should be submitted to.

For the punishment of evildoers] The breakers of the laws of God and men, on whom punishment is to be inflicted by the civil magistrates, for the breach of them, by fines, scourgings, imprisonment, and death itself, according as the crimes are.

And for the praise of them that do well] Who behave according to the laws of God and nations, and are obedient to magistrates, and subject to every ordinance; these have praise of men, of magistrates, and are rewarded by them; by protecting their persons, defending their properties, and preserving them in the peaceable enjoyment of their estates and possessions; see *Romans* xiii. 3.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

For so is the will of God] Which refers not so much to what goes before; though it is a truth, that it is the will of God that men should be subject to magistrates, and that magistrates should encourage virtue, and discourage vice, reward the obedient, and punish delinquents; but to what follows.

That with well doing] By doing good works, and those well; by living soberly, righteously, and godly; by having their conversation honest among the Gentiles, agreeable to the law of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ, particularly, by living according to the laws of civil society, so far as is consistent with, and not contrary to the commands of God; and by being subject to every civil magistrate, and ordinance of man.

Ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men] Or, as the Syriac version renders it, "that ye may stop the mouths of those foolish men who know not God;" or, as the Ethiopic version has it, "who know not these things;" who are ignorant of God, of his righteousness, of his Law, his Gospel, and ordinances. The Gentiles were very ignorant of these things, and very foolish in their imaginations about religious affairs; and from this their ignorance and folly arose calumnies, reflections, and censures upon the people of God; they neither knew God, nor them, nor true religion, and reproached what they understood not, for want of knowing it: now the apostle signified, that it was the declared will of God, that his people should so behave in civil life, that their enemies should be entirely con-

confounded, and silenced, and have nothing to say against them; the word signifies, to be *muzzled*, to have the mouth shut up, as with a bit or bridle; it is used in *Matthew xxii. 12.* *1 Cor. ix. 9.*

16 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

As free] These converted Jews might value themselves on their freedom, partly as the descendants of Abraham, and so free born, and not to be brought into bondage to other people; and chiefly because of their liberty, which they had in and by Christ Jesus. The apostle allows that they were freemen, that they were Christ's freemen; were free from sin, its damning and domineering power, and from the curses and condemnation of the law, and had freedom of access to God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God; but then they were not free to sin, and to live in the contempt of the laws of God and men, to despise government, speak evil of dignities, and break in upon the rules of civil society.

And not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness] Under a pretence of christian liberty, to hurt the persons, properties, and estates of men, without looking upon themselves accountable for their conduct to their superiors: some think the apostle alludes to the ancient custom of servants, who, when they were made free, walked with a cap, or covering on their heads, in token of it: it follows,

But as the servants of God] For they that are free, are the servants of God and Christ, and shew themselves to be so, by submitting to, and obeying those that are under them, and ordained by them; and which is no ways inconsistent with, and contrary to their christian liberty, which never was designed to thwart and subvert the principles of natural religion, laws of a moral nature, or the rules of civil government; some instances of which are next mentioned.

17 Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Honour all men] To whom honour is due, according to the place, station, and circumstances in which they are, the gifts of providence and grace bestowed on them, and the usefulness they are of; whether they be Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, believers or unbelievers: it is a saying of Ben Zoma (e), "Who is to be honoured, or 'is worthy of honour?' מכבד את חבריו " he

"that honoureth creatures;" meaning men in general, or the Gentiles particularly, who were sometimes so called by the Jews; see the note on Mark xvi. 15. and may be meant by *all men* here.

Love the brotherhood] Or "your brethren," as the Syriac version renders it; the whole company of the brethren in Christ, who are born of God, are members of Christ, and of the same body, and have the same spirit, belong to the same family, and are of the household of faith, let them be of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever circumstances of life. The Jews had not that good opinion of, nor that affection for the Gentiles, but were ready to treat them with indifference, neglect, and contempt; and not only those that knew not God, but even believing Gentiles themselves; and which is the reason of these exhortations, that they should despise no man, but honour all; and especially should express their love, both by words and deeds, to those that were in the same spiritual relation with them, and that without any difference, on account of their being of another nation.

Fear God] Not with a servile, but a filial fear, the new covenant-grace of fear; which springs from the goodness of God, has that for its object, and is increased by the fresh instances and discoveries of it; and which shews itself in a reverential affection for God, a strict regard to his worship and ordinances, and a carefulness not to offend him. This is placed between what goes before, and follows after, to shew the influence it has on each of them; for where the fear of God is, there will be due respect shewn to all men, more or less, and an hearty and affectionate love to all the saints, as brethren, and a proper regard to those that are set in high places of dignity and power.

Honour the king] Cesar, the Roman emperor, though a wicked, persecuting Nero, and so any other king or governor; who, so far as he acts the part of a civil magistrate, preserves the peace, the property, and liberty of his subjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil society, is deserving of great honour and esteem from men; and which is to be shewn by speaking well of him; by a cheerful subjection to him; by an observance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing every thing to make him easy, and honourable in his government: advice much like this is given by Isocrates (f); "Fear God, honour parents, revere friends, and obey the laws."

18 Servants

(e) Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 1.

(f) Pæsen, ad Demon. Orat. 1.

18 Servants *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

Servants be subject to your masters] This was another notion of the Jews, that because they were the seed of Abraham, they ought not to be the servants of any; and particularly such as were believers in Christ, thought they ought not to serve unbelieving masters, nor indeed believing ones, because they were equally brethren in Christ with them; hence the apostle Peter here, as the apostle Paul frequently elsewhere, inculcates this duty of servants to their masters; see 1 Cor. vii. 20, 21. Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Titus ii. 9. The manner in which they are to be subject to them is,

With all fear] With reverence to their persons, strict regard to their commands, faithfulness in any trust reposed in them, diligence in the discharge of their duty, and carefulness not to offend them: and all this,

Not only to the good and gentle] Those that are good-natured, kind, beneficent, and merciful; that do not use them with rigour and severity; are moderate in their demands of service; require no more to be done than what is reasonable; allow them sufficient diet, give them good wages, and pay them duly.

But also to the froward] The ill-natured, morose, and rigorous; who exact more labour than is requisite; give hard words, and harder blows; withhold sufficiency of food from them, and keep back the hire of their labours.

19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For this is thank-worthy] Or *grace*; this is a fruit and effect of grace, an instance of it, in which it shews itself: the Syriac version adds, "with God;" and so it is read in one of Beza's copies, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; that is, this is grateful to God, and acceptable with him; as in y. 20.

If a man for conscience toward God] Or "for a good conscience," as the Syriac version reads it; for acting according to his conscience, in matters of religion, in the things of God; "for the knowledge of God," as the Arabic version renders it; for the knowledge of God in Christ; for the people of Christ, and a profession of it; or, "for God," as the Ethiopic version; for the cause of God and truth, and for the sake of things

appertaining to God, and that make for his glory.

Endure grief] What occasions grief, as severe words, bitter reproaches, hard censures, and heavy blows; and that with patience, and without murmuring, and with resignation to the will of God.

Suffering wrongfully] There being no just cause for an ill look, word, or blow to be given.

20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults] Which ye have committed, and are guilty of, and are truly such.

Ye shall take it patiently] To be silent, and not murmur, when beaten, within measure, for real faults, is no great honour, nor does it deserve any praise; it is the least than can be done.

But if, when ye do well] Either in their master's service, or rather, in the business of religion, and the things of God; as when what they do is according to the will of God, and from love to him, and in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God; without all which there is no well-doing.

And suffer for it] Reproach and persecution, by words or blows, in person or property.

Ye take it patiently] Without grieving and repining, or answering again, and making any returns.

This is acceptable with God] Is agreeable to his will, and grateful in his sight, what he is well pleased with, is reckoned grace with him; and though it is his own grace, and of his own bestowing, he will reward it with glory.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

For even hereunto were ye called] Both to well-doing, of which none but those who are called with an holy and effectual calling are capable; and which they are fitted for, and are under obligation to perform; and to suffer for so doing, which they must always expect, and to patience in suffering for it, which highly becomes them. This being then one end of the saints effectual vocation, is made use of as an argument to engage them to the exercise of the grace of patience: in suffering for well-doing; and another follows:

Because

Because Christ also suffered for us] In our room and stead, to fulfil the law, satisfy the justice of God, and make reconciliation for sin; and not only for our good, or merely as a martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or barely as an example to us, though this also is true: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “for you;” for you servants, as well as others, and therefore should cheerfully and patiently suffer for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and the rather, because he suffered, “leaving us, or you,” these same copies, and the Vulgate Latin version read; that is,

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps] Christ is an example to his people in the exercise of grace, as of faith, love, zeal, meekness, and humility; and in the discharge of duty, in his regard to the commands of the moral law, and positive institutions of religion; in his constancy in prayer; in frequent attendance on public worship; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism, and his celebration of the supper; and likewise in his sufferings; and in his meekness, patience, courage, and resignation to the will of God, which is what is here intended, and in which his people are to follow and imitate him.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Who did no sin] He was in the likeness of sinful flesh; he looked like a sinful man, being born of a sinful woman, and keeping company with sinful men, being himself a man of sorrows, greatly afflicted, and at last put to death. He was traduced as a sinner by his enemies, and had all the sins of his people on him, which he bore, and made satisfaction for, and were the reason of his sufferings; but he had no sin in his nature, nor did he commit any in his life.

Neither was guile found in his mouth] Though it was diligently sought for, by the scribes and Pharisees; there was no deceit in his lips, no falshood in his doctrine, any more than there was immorality in his conversation; he was an Israelite indeed on all accounts, and in the fullest sense of that phrase; reference is had to *Isaiah* liii. 9. and this is observed, partly to shew, that Christ suffered not for himself, or for any sins of his own; but for the sins of others, for which he was very fit, since he had none of his own; and partly as an argument for patience in suffering; for since Christ suffered, who had no sin, nor did any, nor could any be found in him, charged upon him, and proved against him; and which sufferings of his he bore with patience; then how much must it become sinful men to bear their sufferings pa-

tiently, though they may not be criminal with respect to the things for which they suffer, but yet are so in other things, whereas Christ was not criminal, nor blameworthy in any thing?

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again] When he was reproached as a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, all the reply he made was, that *Wisdom is justified of her children*; and when he was charged with casting out devils by Belzebub, the prince of devils, he defended himself, not with bad language, but with strong reasonings; and when he was said to be a Samaritan, and had a devil, his only answer was, that he had not, that he honoured his Father, and they dishonoured him; and when he was reviled on the cross, by those that passed by, by the chief priests, and scribes, and the thieves that were crucified with him, he made no return, he opened not his mouth, and much less in a re-criminating way.

When he suffered, he threatened not] When he endured buffetings and scourgings in his body, when the officers in the palace of the high priest spit in his face, buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands, and bid him prophecy who smote him, all which were very provoking; yet he said not one word to them, much less threatened them with what he would do to them for such usage another day, when he would let them know, with vengeance, who it was that smote him; no, he took all patiently from them, and from Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, when scourged by them; he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he suffered crucifixion, and was put to such distressing pains and agonies, he did not threaten his crucifiers with a future judgment, when he would take vengeance, and execute his wrath upon them, but prays to his Father for the forgiveness of their sins, as it follows,

But committed himself to him that judgeth righteously] He commended his spirit, or soul, to God his Father, and committed his cause to him, to vindicate it in what way he should think fit, who he knew was the Judge of all the earth, that would do right; and so the Syriac version supplies it with *mar* “his judgment;” which he left with God, the righteous Judge, to whom vengeance belongs; and which is an example, and an instruction to the saints to do so likewise; not to render railing for railing, or to seek revenge, but

to leave their cause with their God, who will in his own time avenge the wrongs and injuries done them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, "but delivered himself to him that judgeth unjustly;" the sense of which is, that Christ delivered himself into the hands of Pilate, who unjustly condemned him to death; but is neither the reading, nor sense of the text.

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Who his own self bare our sins] As was typified by the high priest, bearing the sins of the holy things of the people of Israel, when he went into the most holy place; and by the scape-goat, bearing the iniquities of all the people unto a land not inhabited, and as was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. The apostle here explains the nature and end of Christ's sufferings, which were to make atonement for sins, and which was done by bearing them. What Christ bore were *sins*, even all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin of his people; and all that is in sin, all that belongs to it, arises from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and punishment; and a multitude of sins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and than which nothing could be more nauseous and disagreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: and these sins he bore were not his own, nor the sins of angels, but of men; and not of all men, yet of many, even as many as were ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, whom he justifies and brings to glory; our sins, not the sins of the Jews only, for Peter was a Jew, and so were those to whom he writes, but of the Gentiles also, even the sins of all his people, for them he saves from their sins, being stricken for them. His *bearing* them was in this manner: he becoming the surety and substitute of his people, their sins were laid upon him by his Father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and placed to his account; and Christ voluntarily took them upon himself; he took them to himself, as one may take the debt of another, and make himself answerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his shoulders; so Christ took up our sins, and *carried them up*, as the word here used signifies, alluding to the priests carrying up the sacrifice to the altar, and referring to the lifting up of Christ upon the cross; whether he carried the sins of his people, and bore them,

and did not sink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself; and so made entire satisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and all that punishment which was due unto them; and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the sight of God, and his vindictive justice; and removed them as far as the east is from the west, and made a full end of them; and this he himself did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another; not by the means of a goat, as the high priest, but by himself; though he was assisted in bearing his cross, yet he had no help in bearing our sins: angels could not help him; his Father stood at a distance from him; there was none to help; his own arm brought salvation to him; but *his own self*, who knew no sin, nor did any, he by himself purged away our sins, and made reconciliation for them, by bearing them: and which he did

In his own body] And not another's; in that body which his Father prepared for him, and which he took of the virgin, and was free from sin; though not to the exclusion of his soul, which also was made an offering for sin, and in which he endured great pains and sorrows for sin: and all this

On the tree] The accursed tree, the cross; which is expressive, both of the shame and pain of his sufferings and death. The end of which was,

That we, being dead to sin] "To our sins," as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read; as all the elect are, through bearing their sins, and suffering death for them, so as that sin shall not be imputed to them; it is as though it never was; it is dead to them, and they to that, as to its damning power and influence; so as that they are entirely discharged from it, and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be hurt, so as to be destroyed by it; nor by death, either corporal or eternal, since the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to them, and they to that: in short, through the death of Christ they are so dead to sin, that it is not only finished, made an end of, and put away, but the body of it is destroyed, that it should not be served; which is an end subordinate to the former, and expressed in the next clause.

Should live unto righteousness] Live, and not die the second death, and live by faith on the righteousness of Christ, for justification of life, and soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; which the grace of God teaches, and the

the love of Christ in bearing sin constrains to, and the redemption by his precious blood, lays under an obligation to do; for those whose sins Christ has bore, are not their own, but being bought with the price of his blood, they are bound to live to him who has a property in them, and a right to claim to all obedience from them.

By whose stripes ye were healed] The passage referred to is in *Isaiah* liii. 5. which is a prophecy of the Messiah, as is acknowledged by the Jews (g). Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemical distemper, that reaches to all men, and to all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and which is nauseous and lothesome, and in itself mortal and incurable; nor can it be healed by any creature, or any thing that a creature can do. Christ is the only physician, and his blood the balm and sovereign medicine; this cleanses from all sin; through it is the remission of sin, which is meant by healing; for healing of diseases, and forgiving iniquities, is one and the same thing; see *Psalms* ciii. 3. *Isaiah* xxxiii. 24. *Psalms* xli. 4. on which latter text a learned Jew (h) has this note, "This interpreters explain, *לפניו סליחה* "as expressive of forgiveness;" and the Jews say, there is no healing of diseases, but it signifies forgiveness (i); it is an uncommon way of healing by the stripes of another. Some think the apostle alludes to the stripes which servants receive from their masters, to whom he was now speaking; and in order to encourage them to bear them patiently, observes, that Christ himself suffered stripes, and that they had healing for their diseases and wounds, by means of his stripes, or through his being wounded and bruised for them.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

For ye were as sheep going astray] This is a proof of their being healed, namely, their conversion; in which an application of the blood of Christ, and pardon, and so healing by it, was made to their souls. The apostle has still in view the prophecy of *Isaiah*, chap. liii. 6. God's elect are sheep before conversion; not that they have the agreeable properties of sheep, as to be meek, harmless, innocent, clean, and profitable; for they are the reverse of all this: nor can some things be said of them before conversion, as may be after, as that they hear Christ's voice, and follow him;

nor are they so called, because unprejudiced against, and predisposed unto the Gospel; for the contrary is true of them: but they are so in electing grace, and were so considered in the Father's gift of them to Christ, and when made his care and charge, and hence they are called the sheep of his hand; and when Christ laid down his life, and rose again, which he did for the sheep, and as the great Shepherd of them; and when called by grace, for their being sheep, and Christ's own sheep by the Father's gift, and his own purchase, is the reason why he looks them up, calls them by name, and returns them: but then they are not yet of his fold; they are lost sheep, lost in Adam, and by his fall, and by their own actual transgressions; they are as sheep going astray from the shepherd and from the flock, going out of the right way, and in their own ways; and are, like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger; and, as they, never return of themselves, until they are sought for, and brought back: hence it follows,

But are now returned] Not returned themselves, but were returned by powerful and efficacious grace: saints are passive, and not active in first conversion; they are turned, not by the power of their own free-will, but by the power of God's free-grace; they are returned under the illuminations and quickenings of the blessed Spirit, and through the efficacious drawings of the Father's love, unto Christ.

Unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls] By whom Christ is meant, who bears the office of a shepherd, and fully performs it by feeding his sheep, providing a good fold and pasture for them; by gathering the lambs in his arms, and gently leading those that are with young; by healing their diseases, and preserving them from beasts of prey; hence he is called the good, the great and chief shepherd: and he is the bishop or overseer of the souls of his people, though not to the exclusion of their bodies: he has took the oversight of them willingly, and looks well to his flock, inspects into their cases, and often visits them, and never forsakes them; nor will he leave them till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, which he has undertook and effected by his obedience, sufferings, and death. Philo the Jew (k) observes, that "to be a shepherd is so good a work, that it is not only a title given to kings and wise men, and souls perfectly purified, but to God the governor of all—who, as a shepherd and king, leads according to justice and law, setting over them his right *Lagos*, "the

(g) Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 53. 3. & 90. 1. Vid. R. Moses Haddarshan apud Galatin. de Arcanis Cathol. Verit. l. 6. c. 2. (h) R. Sol. Urbini. Obad Mosad, fol. 64. 1. (i) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 43. 1.

(k) De Agricultura, p. 194, 195.

"the first-begotten Son," who has taken the care of this holy flock, as does the deputy of a great king."

CHAP. III.

In this chapter the apostle instructs wives how to behave towards their husbands, and husbands how to behave towards their wives; and then exhorts to various things common to all christians, and particularly to suffer patiently for righteousness-sake; to which he encourages them from the sufferings of Christ, and the benefits resulting from them, on which he enlarges to the end of the chapter. He begins with the duty of wives to their husbands, even unbelieving ones, which is subjection to them, urged from the profitable effect of it; since hereby they might be won over to the christian religion, without the use of the word, as a means, by their conversation, which is explained of chastity and fear, *ŷ. 1, 2.* And he proceeds to give some advice about their apparel, that they should have a greater regard to internal ornaments, particularly meekness and quietness of spirit, which is highly esteemed of by God, rather than to outward adorning; and which he enforces by the examples of godly women in former times, who were so adorned, and were subject to their husbands, particularly Sarah, the wife of Abraham, *ŷ. 3—6.* And next the apostle directs husbands how to conduct toward their wives, to dwell with them, and honour them, because vessels, and weaker vessels, and also heirs of the same grace of life; and besides, to use them ill would be an hindrance of their praying together, *ŷ. 7.* And then follow various exhortations to unity of judgment, compassion, brotherly love, pity, courteousness, and patience under the reproaches and revilings of men, which is the way to inherit a blessing they are called unto, *ŷ. 8, 9.* and that these are incumbent on the saints, and that they shall be blessed, who are helped to regard them, is proved by some passages out of *Psalms xxxiv. 12—16.* which passages are cited, *ŷ. 10—12.* And in order to encourage to the exercise of the above things, the apostle suggests, that they that so behaved should not be hurt by any; and if they did suffer for righteousness-sake from wicked men, yet still they would be happy; nor should this deter them from making a public confession of their faith; to which should be added a good conscience and conversation, to the shame and confusion of them that spoke evil of them, and accused them, *ŷ. 13—16.* And though they were

distressed and injured by men, they should not be cast down, nor murmur, since it was the will of God it should be so; and since it was better to suffer for doing well, than for doing ill; and especially the example of Christ should animate to patience, since he, an innocent person, suffered for the sins of unjust men, to reconcile them to God; and he is now glorified and happy, and so will his people be, *ŷ. 17, 18.* And having made mention of his being quickened by the Spirit, the apostle takes occasion from hence of observing, that by the same Spirit Christ preached in the times of Noah to disobedient persons, whose spirits were now in hell; and he takes notice of the long-suffering of God in that dispensation towards them, and of the goodness of God in saving Noah and his family in the ark, which was a figure of baptism; of which some account is given what it is, and is not, and which saves by the resurrection of Christ, *ŷ. 19—21.* who is described by his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and dominion over angels, authorities, and powers, *ŷ. 22.*

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands] As well as subjects to princes, and servants to masters; though not with the same sort of subjection, but what is suitable to the relation they stand in to their husbands see the notes on *Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18.*

That, if any obey not the word] Any husband who is an unbeliever, has no love for the Gospel, and gives no credit to it, but despises, disbelieves, and rejects it, the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, reconciliation, and salvation. The apostle, though he includes all wives, and exhorts them in general to subjection to their own husbands, yet has a particular regard to such as had unbelieving husbands, and who, on that account, were scrupulous of living with them, and of being in subjection to them; and therefore, as the apostle Paul also did, he advises them to abide with them, and behave well to them, using much the same argument as he does in *1 Cor. vii. 10, 13, 16.*

They also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives] For though the ordinary way and means of conversion is the word, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word; yet, it

it may be sometimes done without it; or however, by the agreeable conversation of professors, and so of religious wives, the hearts of such as were averse to christianity and the Gospel, as unbelieving husbands, may be so softened and wrought upon, as to entertain a better opinion of it, and in process of time be inclined to hear and attend it; the consequence of which may prove their conversion, which is a gaining, or winning of souls; and which, as it is for their good, is for the glory of Christ; for as every soul that is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of Christ, is a loss to Satan, it is a gain to Christ, and to his church. The Syriac version, instead of, "without the word," reads, "without labour;" as if the winning of unbelieving husbands was easily obtained by the conversation of their wives.

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

While they behold your chaste conversation] Cheerful subjection, strong affection, and inviolable attachment to them, and strict regard to the honour of the marriage-state, and to the preserving of the bed undefiled with lusts and adulteries.

Coupled with fear] With reverence of their husbands, giving them due honour, and shewing all proper respect; or with the fear of God, which being before their eyes, and upon their hearts, engages them to such an agreeable conversation.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning] Or that only and principally; let not that be solely or chiefly attended to, nor anxiously sought after, nor ever in order to allure and ensnare others, or to fill with pride and vanity; nor should it be indecent and luxurious, immodest and immoderate, and unsuitable to the age, character, and station of persons; otherwise clothing is both convenient and necessary; and a decent garb, neat and modest apparel, and what is suitable to the years, rank, and quality of persons, is very commendable: nor are we to suppose that the apostle forbids the use of what follows, but only when used in a luxurious and extravagant manner, and to feed pride and vanity, and encourage lasciviousness and wantonness.

Of plaiting the hair] Folding it up in curls, tying it up in knots, and putting it into the form of horns and towers, made by their crisping pins, with their cauls and round tires, like the moon, as was the custom of those times, and still is.

There were women among the Jews, whose business it was to plait womens hair; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from thence, and that to be her business. The Jews often speak of one Miriam or Mary, by whom they seem to mean the mother of our Lord, who, they say (*m*), was, מַגְדָּלָה שֵׁער נְשִׁים "a plaiter of womens hair;" see the note on *Matt.* xxvii. 56.

And of wearing of gold] Or golden things; golden ornaments; as bracelets, chains, and rings, or pieces of gold stuck in the plaitings and folds of the hair. The Jewish women used to wear a crown of gold on their head, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, called a golden city (*n*), and which they wore, after its destruction, in memory of it; but with those they might not go out on a sabbath-day. R. Akibah, it is said (*o*), made a golden city for his wife, and the wife of Rabban Gamaliel envied her, for it seems this was reckoned a grand dress. Not that the sense is, that every thing of this kind is forbidden, but when used to excess and extravagance; otherwise the daughters of Abraham and Sarah were decked with ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels of gold; see *Gen.* xxiv. 22, 30, 47, 53.

Or of putting on of apparel] That is, "excellent, or precious," as the Syriac version adds; or "of great price," as the Ethiopic; that is, beyond a person's ability or rank; the apostle means such apparel as is unbecoming and unsuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel; but his sense is, that women should not so much regard, and be so intent upon the outward adorning of their bodies, with any sort of clothing, and especially such as does not become them, as the inward adorning of their minds, next mentioned.

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

But let it be the hidden man of the heart] By which is meant internal grace; which gives a beauty and ornament to the soul, far preferable to that which plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or any costly apparel, can give to the body: and this is called a *man*, as it is elsewhere the *new man*, Eph. iv. 24. because it has that which answers to what is in man, to his soul, and the powers and faculties of it: this *man*, or new creature, has a new heart and spirit; it has a will

(*m*) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagig. fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 67. 1.

(*n*) Misa. Sabbat, c. 6. §. 1.

(*o*) T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 7. 4.

to that which is spiritually good, and an understanding of divine things, and affections for Christ, for his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and people, and for things above: it has what answers to all the five senses; there is in it a seeing of the Son of God in the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and of the invisible things of another world; an hearing of the word, of the voice of Christ, so as to understand it, and live, and to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; a smelling a sweet savour in the things of God, and of his Spirit, and in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; a tasting that the Lord is gracious, his fruits pleasant, and his word sweeter than the honey, or the honey-comb; and a feeling of the burden of sin, an handling of the word of life, a laying hold on Christ, and retaining him: and it has what answers to the parts and members of the body; it has eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to receive from Christ, and work with to his glory, and feet to walk with: it has, in short, all the parts of a man, though these are not yet grown up to perfection; and so that is not yet a perfect man, or arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; but a man it is: and *a man of the heart*; it has its seat there; it is an inward principle in the soul; hence it is called the *inner and inward man*; and nothing outward is it, as external humiliation for sin, abstinence from it, reformation of life and manners, a profession of religion, and conformity to Gospel-ordinances; but it is something inward, as appears from its names, both here and elsewhere; it is called spirit, seed, the root of the matter, and oil in the vessels; and from the seat and subject of it, the heart, the spirit, the understanding and will, the mind, conscience, and affections: and it is the *hidden man*; it is wisdom in the hidden part; it is hidden from the men of the world; they do not know what it is, nor what it means, nor how it is, or can be; the life of it is hidden from them, and the food it lives upon is hidden manna to them, and so are both its joys and sorrows: it is sometimes hidden from the saints themselves; when they walk in darkness, and see no light, they are at a loss to know whether this principle is in them or no; and it is hidden from other believers, till they give an account of it to them, when by comparing it with the word of God, and their own experience, they perceive it is the grace of God in them; and it is hidden from Satan, it is out of his reach, he cannot touch it; though he can touch the old man, and stir up the corruptions of it, yet he cannot touch the new man, that which is born of God, nor hurt or destroy it: but it is not hidden from God; he sees it where men cannot, being

covered with a variety of infirmities and sins, and knows it is not where men sometimes think it is. The nature of this hidden man is further expressed by what follows,

In that which is not corruptible] It is opposed to corruptible things, as the outward adorning consists of, such as plaited hair, silver and gold, golden chains, rings, &c. and costly apparel; nor is it corrupt in itself; the old man is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, but this new man, the hidden man of the heart, has no corruption in it, nor cleaving to it: it is the workmanship of God, and is created in righteousness and holiness; though it is as yet imperfect, there is nothing impure in it; nor can it ever perish, or be lost; it is an incorruptible seed, and will always remain when gold will perish, and the best of garments be moth-eaten, and decay.

Even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit] This is one, and a principal part of the inward adorning, or hidden man of the heart; and those that are possessed of such a spirit, are not easily provoked to anger; patiently bear, and put up with injuries; carry themselves affably and courteously unto all; entertain the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; do not envy the gifts and graces of others, and are willing to be instructed and admonished by the meanest saint; quietly submit to the will of God, in all adverse dispensations of providence; and ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; and reckon that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants. This grace of meekness, humility, and quietness, is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a part of the hidden man, and is what is very ornamental to a believer; it is his clothing, his inward adorning, and what makes him lovely in the sight of God, and of his people; see 1 Peter v. 5. and it is very useful to him in hearing the word, in giving a reason of the hope that is in him, in restoring others, and in shewing forth a good conversation; and particularly it greatly becomes, and exceedingly beautifies women professing godliness; who ought to bear much with their husbands, and be in silence; which is what the apostle has a principal regard unto: and to encourage the more to the exercise of it, adds,

Which is in the sight of God of great price] Which may refer to the whole adorning, to the hidden man of the heart, which is incorruptible, in opposition to the outward adorning, which may be esteemed by men, and be precious in their sight; and particularly to the ornament of meekness, and quietness of spirit; for God has a great regard to the meek, humble, and quiet souls; he lifts them up,

up, when cast down; he causes glad tidings to be preached to them; he increases their joy in the Lord; he feeds them, when hungry, to their satisfaction; he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his ways; he will rise up in judgment for them, and reprove with equity for their sake; he gives more grace unto them, and beautifies them with salvation, and will cause them to inherit the earth.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

For after this manner in the old time] In ages past, the years of many generations, since the time that God created man upon earth; in the times before the flood, and after it; in the times of the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of Israel, under the Old Testament dispensation. The apostle exhorts and encourages to this inward dress and ornament, from the antiquity of it; for in this way, and after this fashion,

The holy women also] Who were sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives, and conversations, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Ruth, Hannah, and others.

Who trusted in God] That he would send the Messiah, and make good all his promises, judging and believing him to be faithful to his word, and able to fulfil whatever he had promised, as Sarah, *Heb. xi. 11.* Such holy and believing women as these are worthy of imitation in their adorning and dress, and who, in the manner before described by the apostle,

Adorned themselves] Or this was the adorning which they sought after, valued, and chiefly regarded; not what was external, but internal: and which lay in meekness and humility, and in a quiet deportment, and in

Being in subjection unto their own husbands] According to their original make, and natural relation, and the laws of God, and of creation; which is more becoming and adorning than plaiting of hair, wearing of gold, or costly raiment, and recommends them more, both in the sight of God and men; nothing being a more indecent and uncomely sight than a woman not in subjection to her husband.

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham] Going along with

him wherever he went, as from Chaldea to Canaan, and into Egypt, and the land of the Philistines, saying the words he put into her mouth, *Gen. xii. 5, 11, 13.* and doing the things he bid her do, *Gen. xviii. 6.*

Calling him lord] Or "my lord," as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and as it appears she did from *Gen. xviii. 12.* The Jews use this instance to the same purpose the apostle does, saying (p), "The wife ought to take care of the family, to educate her children, to serve and minister to her husband in all things, calling him her own lord; which is what we learn from the example of Sara, who called Abraham her lord, saying, *My lord is old.*"

Whose daughters ye are] Meaning not by natural descent, though they were, these being Jews, the apostle writes to, but by grace, and in a spiritual sense; just as those are the children of Abraham, who walk in the steps of his faith, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; so such are the daughters of Sara, the children of the free woman, who imitate her in faith and obedience; that is, they appear, and are declared to be so.

As long as ye do well] Do acts of beneficence and hospitality to strangers, and proper objects, as Sara did, and all and every good work, according to the will of God, from love, and in faith, and with a view to his glory; and particularly obey and live in subjection to their husbands, as she did.

And are not afraid with any amazement] Are not deterred from doing well, nor scared by the terrors and menaces of wicked men, either their own husbands, or others; or who with fortitude and intrepidity of mind, continue in the discharge of their duty to God and men, and particularly to their husbands, following them, and obeying their lawful commands, as Sara did in Egypt, and in Gerar, though she exposed herself to great danger; this is said, because women are timorous, and apt to be frightened at every thing from the performance of their duty.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them] "With your wives," as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions

(p) *Sepher Musar apud Drus. de Quantis, Ep. 54. & in loc.*

sions read; which not only included dwelling together in the same house, and bedding together in the same bed, but the whole of conjugal conversation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married state.

According to knowledge] Of themselves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal state, and the laws of God and man respecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Gospel, and the christian dispensation, which no ways breaks in upon, but strengthens and encourages to the observance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that superior knowledge of things, which, generally speaking, men have to women; as also wisely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and christians: particularly

Giving honour to the wife] By speaking well of her, and respectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, suitable to her station; but by providing every thing honest and comely for her, food and raiment, a suitable maintenance, all the necessaries, conveniencies, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which sense the word *honour* is used in 1 Tim. v. 3, 17. and this was agreeable to the doctrine of the Jews (q), who say, "Let a man always take care, *בכבוד אשתו* " of the glory of his wife;" "for there is no blessing found in a man's house, but for the sake of his wife, as it is said, Gen. xii. 16. *And he intreated Abraham well for her sake*; and Rabba used to say to the citizens *ואקיר לנשינו* "honour your wives," that ye "may be rich." And indeed, this is what they promised in their marriage-contract, which runs thus (r): "Be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel; and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worship *ואקיר* "and honour, and nourish, and take care of thee, according to the custom of the Jews, who worship, and honour, and nourish, and take care of their wives."

As unto the weaker vessel] So the wife is called a vessel in 1 Thess. iv. 4. see the note there, and here *the weaker*; being so, for the most part, both as to strength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be used gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and severity; but as in every state and condition, the strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; so a man should bear with, and accommodate himself to the infirmities

of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expose them, nor despise her on account of them. It is a saying of the Jews (s), "If thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself, and whisper to her." The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness.

And as being heirs together of the grace of life] Not of a natural life, and the good things of it; though husbands and wives partake of the same kind of life, and have a right unto, and share in the same necessities of life; so Adam and Eve were partakers of the same life, and sharers of the same benefits; and which is a reason indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but something more is intended; not the external gifts of the Spirit, which, unless in some few instances, are bestowed on men, and not on women; nor the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; though men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; see Gal. iii. 28. but grace here, and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, "heirs together of the manifold grace of life;" God's own people, without any difference as to sex, as men and women, equally share in grace, as it signifies the love and favour of God; which is the same to all the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlasting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, sovereign, special, discriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one sort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, it not admitting of more or less; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and so they are heirs of it, as it denotes the blessings of grace; being equally heirs of, and sharers in electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which, as to their principles, are the same in all the saints, though different as to the degree of the exercise of them: and which may be called *the grace of life*; or "living grace," as some copies, and the Complutensian edition read, and so the Arabic version; because by it men and women, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened; and in distinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and because it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetness for eternal life, which it springs up to, issues in, and is inseparably

(q) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1. & Sepher Musar apud Drusium in loc. (r) Apud Buxtorf. Chald. Gram. p. 389.

(s) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1.

separably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and salvation, of which the saints, without any difference as to sex, are heirs of: so some copies read, "heirs of manifold grace, and life;" by the former, meaning grace here; and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of vision of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever; and may be called the *grace of life*, because it is the free gift of God's grace; and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "the gift of eternal life;" and the Ethiopic version, "glorious life;" and this is represented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquisition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequest unto them. Now all the saints, of whatever state, condition, or sex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all shall enjoy; and whatever disparity there may be, particularly between husband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why husbands should dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, since they are upon a par in spiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, and because they are now joint-heirs of, and shall equally share in eternal life and happiness.

[*That your prayers be not hindered*] As they would be, were they not to dwell together; or should not the husband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would arise strifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would such prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men should lift up holy hands every where, whether in public, or in private, in God's house, or in their own houses, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may observe, that family prayer is a duty incumbent on professors of religion, and great care should be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

8 Finally, *be ye all of one mind*, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous*.

[*Finally, be ye all of one mind*] Not that the apostle was about to conclude his epistle; but having finished his exhortations respecting the obedience of subjects to magistrates, and of ser-

vants to their masters, and the duties incumbent on husbands and wives, he proceeds to sum up what he had further to say, in general rules; which regarded all sorts of christians, magistrates, and subjects, masters and servants; husbands and wives, parents and children, old and young, rich and poor, of whatsoever state, age, sex, or condition; and so the Arabic version renders it, "the sum of the commandment is;" and the Ethiopic version, "the sum of all is this;" namely, what follows.

[*Be ye all of one mind*] Whatever difference there might be in their natural and civil relation and character; and which is to be understood not of the sameness of affection to one another, or of an humble and condescending spirit, disposition, and carriage to each other, for these are expressed in some following exhortations; but of sameness of judgment with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, in which saints should be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; for as the church is but one body, of which Christ is the head, there should be but one mind in it; even as there is but one Spirit of God, who convinces, enlightens, and leads into truth; and but one heart, and way, given to fear the Lord; and there is but one hope of our calling, or to which we are called; and one way to it, and therefore ought to agree in every thing respecting the way, the truth, and the life; though in things which do not, should bear with one another; and there is but one Lord, who gives the same laws and ordinances to one as to another, and which are to be kept alike by all; and there is but one faith, one doctrine of faith, which is uniform and all of apiece, and but one rule and standard of faith, the sacred scriptures; and but one baptism to be administered in the same way, and upon the same sort of subjects, and in the same name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and but one God and Father of all; all belong to the same family, and therefore should preserve an unity of spirit and mind, and speak of the same things; which is necessary to carry on the worship of God honourably and regularly, to the glorifying of him, and for the peace, comfort, and safety of the churches of Christ.

[*Having compassion one of another*] Or sympathizing with each other, both in prosperity and adversity, whether in temporal or spiritual things; rejoicing with them that rejoice in Christ, make their boast of him, and have communion with him, and who are also blessed with health of body, and a competency of the good things of this life; and weeping with them that weep, for

K k

the

the loss of goods, relations, &c. and being in bonds and afflictions; or because of sin, the absence of Christ, and the temptations of Satan; and being concerned also for such who are fallen into immorality, or error, and heresy; endeavouring to restore them out of the one or the other, in a spirit of meekness and tenderness: to all which, they should be engaged by the example of Christ, the sympathizing high priest; by the consideration of the divine compassion to them, both in a providential way, and in a way of grace; and on account of their union and relation to each other, as members of the same body.

Love as brethren] Not in a natural and civil, but in a spiritual relation, being children of God, and brethren of Christ, and in a Gospel-church-state; and whose love to each other ought to be universal, fervent, without dissimulation, and as Christ has loved them; and which should shew itself in praying for each other, in bearing one another's burdens, in forgiving each other, in admonishing in love, and building up one another on their most holy faith, and communicating to each other both in temporals and spirituals: and of a very excellent nature is it; it is the bond of perfectness, and evidence of regeneration; the glory and ornament of a profession, and without which it is nothing; and what renders the communion of the saints with each other pleasant and profitable, comfortable to themselves, and honourable in the eyes of others; and to which they should be induced, from the consideration of the love of God and Christ unto them, and from their relation to each other, as brethren.

Be pitiful] To those that are in distress; put on bowels of mercy, and relieve and succour them, distributing cheerfully to their necessities.

Be courteous] Gentle and affable, carrying it friendly to one another, seeking those things which may be most agreeable to each other, shunning all moroseness, stiffness, and incivility. The Vulgate Latin version renders it by two words, "modest, humble;" not proud, haughty, and overbearing, but condescending to each other, and to men of low estates; and so the Syriac version renders it, "kind and meek."

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Not rendering evil for evil] Doing an ill thing in return to one that has done ill to you, and in

a way of revenge for it; which is contrary to what is before advised to; and which is taking God's prerogative and work out of his hands, whose vengeance is; and which is to be overcome of evil.

Or railing for railing] Returning ill language to such as have given it, but rather should imitate Christ, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, chapter ii. 23. and whose advice is, instead of returning injuries, blows, or words, to turn to him that smites on the right cheek the other also; and to bless them that curse, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that persecute, *Matthew v. 39. 44.* and which is here directed to.

But contrariwise blessing] Praying for a blessing on them; for if we are to do so for our enemies, for them that hate us, despitely use and persecute us, as did Christ, Stephen the protomartyr, and the apostles, then much more for our fellow-Christians, who may do us an injury, or speak evil of us, or to us; who seem to be chiefly intended: the argument to persuade to it follows,

Knowing that ye are thereunto called] Referring either to what goes before, being called by grace to the discharge of all the above duties exhorted to, and particularly to suffer patiently all injuries and affronts; and instead of making returns in the same way, to bless and pray for those that have hurt us, either by words or deeds; see chap. ii. 20, 21. or to what follows,

That ye should inherit a blessing] Temporal blessing, or blessings; for godliness has the promise of this life, and godly persons shall not want any good thing; and even whilst the blessings of others are cursed, they have their outward mercies with a blessing, and they are blessings indeed to them; wherefore, the little they may have, is better than the large affluence of others: and also spiritual blessing, or blessings; such as peace of conscience, the pardon of all their sins, a justifying righteousness, adopting grace, all supplies of grace from Christ, his presence, and communion with him: and also an eternal one, even life for evermore; called so, because it springs from the free favour, good will, and blessing of God, and which its being an inheritance also shews; and because such that enjoy it are eternally and unspeakably happy.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

For he that will love life] This, with what follows

follows here, and in the two next verses, are taken out of *Psal. xxxiv. 12—16.* and are produced as a proof of what is before said; that it is a good man's duty not to do or speak evil in return for what is done or said to him; but on the contrary, it becomes him to avoid evil, do good, and seek peace as much as possible, and leave it with a righteous God to vindicate him and his cause, who will not fail to do it; and that such shall inherit the blessing both here and hereafter: in the *Psal.*, these words are put by way of question, *What man is he that desireth life?* that wills it with pleasure, that loves it with a love of complacency and delight? And which is to be understood, not of natural life; for what man is there that does not love that? love of a natural life is natural to men; it is a first principle in nature to desire life, and the preservation of it, and to a great length; a man will give all that he has for it; as Satan said, *Job ii. 4.* but both of a spiritual life of faith on Christ, communion with him, and holiness from him; the life of God, or to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which carnal men are alienated from, and enemies to, and cannot desire, only spiritual men; and of an eternal one; and so some of the Jewish interpreters (u) understand by life and good days, in the *Psal.*, such as are both in this world, and in that which is to come.

And see good days] Not the days of this life, which are evil, even the days of a good man, *Gen. xlvii. 9.* and the more so, the longer he lives; for the days of old age are evil days, in which there is no pleasure, *Ecc. xii. 1.* unless such days are meant, in which much good is done to the honour and glory of God, and in which gracious souls enjoy much of God, and see and taste of his grace and goodness in the land of the living; though rather, the good days of eternity, even length of days for ever and ever, which holy men of God shall see, and enjoy in the other world, when they shall be possessed of fullness of joy, and of pleasure for evermore: in the *Psal.* it is, *and loveth many days, that he may see good;* desires a blessed eternity of good things.

Let him refrain his tongue from evil] Bridle that unruly member, which has a world of iniquity in it; let him keep it as with a bit, from the vices incident to it; from all obscene words, filthy and corrupt communication, whatever is unfavourable and unedifying; from lying, cursing, swearing, and particularly from railing and evil speaking, in return for such language, which is chiefly meant; as well as from belching out blasphemies

against God, and damnable heresies among men; for whoever would be thought a religious man, and lays no restraint on his tongue, his religion is a vain thing, *James i. 26.*

And his lips that they speak no guile] As flatterers do, who speak that with their mouth which does not agree with their heart, and so beguile and deceive persons; and as false teachers, who use dishonest arts, walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, use ambiguous phrases, and words of double meaning, and with their good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple; but such things do not become persons that seek for glory, honour and immortality; that profess to be Israelites indeed; in these guile should not be found in their lips, nor in their lives.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

Let him eschew evil] Avoid all kind of evil, hate it, abstain from the appearance of it, and have no fellowship with it; and particularly should avoid rendering evil for evil, or taking revenge on persons for doing him ill.

And do good] Every thing that is good, all good works, according to the will of God, in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and without trusting to them, and depending upon them for life and salvation; and particularly do good for evil; do good to all men, acts of kindness and beneficence, even to enemies, and especially to them that are of the household of faith. The Jewish interpreters (w) on the *Psal.* from whence these words are taken, observe, that in the first of these clauses are contained all the negative precepts, whose number with them is three hundred sixty, and five; and in the latter of them, all the affirmative precepts, which amount to two hundred and forty-eight.

Let him seek peace, and ensue it] Or pursue it; let him seek after it, in the world, and with all men, as much as possible, yea with his very enemies, and live a peaceable and quiet life, in the kingdom, city, town, and neighbourhood where he is; and particularly in the church of God, and with the saints; which he should seek with all diligence and eagerness, and pursue with all vigour to the utmost of his power; and endeavour to cultivate all he can, and follow the things which make for it. The note of one of the Jewish commentators (x) on this passage is, "seek peace,"

(u) Kimchi in *Psal.* xxxiv. 17.

(w) Aben Ezra & Kimchi in *Psal.* xxxiv. 14. (x) Jarchi.

"peace," in thine own place; "and pursue it," in another place.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. Who are so not merely in the sight of men, but of God; nor in their own account, and by their own works, but in the esteem of God, through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: and because he loves this righteousness, and is well pleased with it; seeing by it his law is magnified and made honourable, therefore his countenance beholds with pleasure and delight those righteous ones who are clothed with it; his eyes of omniscience, love, care, and protection, are always upon them, watching over them, delighting in them, running to and fro in the earth on behalf of them; he sees every injury done them, and in his own time and way will do them justice; which is a reason why they should not take vengeance themselves, but leave it with him, whose it is.

And his ears are open unto their prayers. Or prayer, in the Hebrew text, "to their cry," he is a God hearing prayer, and his righteous ones have his ear; he hears them whilst they are speaking, and will sooner or later answer, and avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; for as he has an ear to hear their cries, which is not heavy, he has an arm to save them, which is not shortened; and this is another reason why they should behave as before directed, and which is still strengthened by what follows.

But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. It is added in the Psalm, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. By the face of the Lord, is meant, as the Jewish writers (y) interpret it, the anger of the Lord; it intends not his kind, pleasant, and loving countenance, but his angry one; with the former he beholds the upright, and with it he looks upon his righteous ones; but the latter is upon and against the wicked, and is dreadful and intolerable, and the consequence of it is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

And who is he that will harm you. Or "can

"harm you." God will not; for his eyes are upon the righteous, to protect and defend them, and his ears are open to their cries, to avenge them; he is on their side, and he is the only law-giver that is able to save, and to destroy. Christ will not; for when he came the first time, it was not to condemn, but to save; and when he comes a second time, though he will rule the wicked with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel; yet his people, who are his jewels, he will spare, as a man spares his only son. Good angels will not; these rejoice at the conversion, and in the salvation of sinful men, encamp about the saints, and are ministering spirits to them: nor the devil; though he would devour, he cannot; for greater is he that is in the saints, than he that is in the world: nor can sin; for though it wars against them, it shall not have the dominion over them; and though it often breaks in upon their peace and comfort, it cannot damn and destroy their souls: nor the law; for though it pronounces guilty, and curses those that are under it, and are of the works of it, yet since Christ has fulfilled it for his people, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, the curse, it lies not against them, nor can it inflict any punishment on them: nor the men of the world; who hate and persecute the saints, these can do them no real harm; they cannot hurt their grace, which shines the brighter, being tried and proved in the furnace of affliction; they cannot destroy their peace and comfort by all the trouble they give them: all the harm they can do them, is to their bodies; they can do none to their souls; and even all the evil things they do to their bodies, work together for their good; and they must be very wicked men that will do harm in any respect to such as behave well in states, cities, towns, or neighbourhoods.

If ye be followers of that which is good. Of God, who is essentially, originally, and infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures, by imitating him in holiness and righteousness, in kindness, mercy, and beneficence; and of Christ, the good Shepherd, following him in the exercise of grace, as of humility, love, patience, &c. and in the discharge of duty; and of good men, the apostles of Christ, the first churches, faithful ministers, and all such who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, and that both in doctrine and practice; and of all good things, whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, particularly righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, *zealots*, or "zealous of good;" of good works, as in *Titus* ii. 14. and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

14 But

(y) Jarchi & Menachem apud ibid. & Aben Ezra in loc.

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake] For the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which was the great stumbling-block to the Jews, and on account of which they persecuted the christians; it being not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of men, and was contrary to the method they had fixed on, and what excluded boasting in them, and was thought to be a licentious doctrine; and for a righteous cause, for professing Christ and his Gospel; for vindicating both which, whoever did, must expect to suffer persecution; and also for living soberly, righteously, and godly; for by a religious life and conversation the saints are separated from the world, and are distinguished from them, which in effect sets a mark of infamy and reproach upon them: and saints by an agreeable life reprove others, and condemn them; all which, irritate and provoke them to hate and persecute them: now these words prevent an objection that might be made to what is before said; that none can, or will harm such as are followers of good; whereas it is a clear case, that saints for righteousness' sake are hurt, and do suffer in their persons, characters, and estates; they are reproached and reviled, and often suffer confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and even death itself. To which the apostle answers, by granting it, and supposing that this should be the case, as it sometimes is; yet no hurt is done them, they are still happy persons.

Happy are ye] Since suffering on such an account is a gift of God, even as believing in Christ itself is, and is a real honour done to a person, and to be so accounted; moreover, such generally enjoy much of the presence of God, and the comforts of his Spirit; the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon them; hereby the graces of the Spirit of God in them are exercised, tried, and proved, and shine out the brighter; the faith and hope of other christians are strengthened, and God is glorified; and besides, the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life, and eternal glory, with which their sufferings are not to be compared, are theirs, and which they shall certainly enjoy.

And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled] Referring to a passage in *Isaiah* viii. 12. and the meaning is, neither be not afraid with the same sort of fear as wicked men are; with a worldly, slavish fear of men, and of the loss of worldly things, and of life itself: or "afraid of them,"

as the Syriac version renders it; who inject fear into you; do not be afraid of their revilings and reproaches, of their threatenings and menaces, and even of death itself by them, which is the utmost they can do; do not be troubled at any thing they say or do to you; since nothing can harm you, since God is on your side, Christ has delivered you from this present evil world, and saved you out of the hands of every enemy; and since the love of God, which casteth out fear, is shed abroad in your hearts, and you are encompassed with it, and nothing can separate you from it.

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts] Still referring to *Isaiah* viii. 13. not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being essentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy; but by declaring and proclaiming his holiness, as the seraphim in *Isaiah's* prophecy, and the four living creatures in the Revelation did; and by glorifying of him, praising and applauding all his perfections, and among the rest, this of his holiness, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it; which he has so much displayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; hence the Arabic version renders it, "bless the Lord God in your hearts:" the Lord God is sanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praise him; but here an internal sanctification of him, a sanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is opposed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exercise of the grace of fear upon him; see *Isaiah* viii. 13. and which has for its object his goodness, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child-like and godly fear; and in the exercise of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promises, his faithfulness, and power to help, assist, and preserve; whereby glory is given to him, a witness born to his truth, and he is sanctified: some copies, as the Alexandrian, and one of Stephens's read, "Sanctify the Lord Christ;" and so read the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and certain it is that he is intended in *Isaiah* viii. 13. as appears from *x. 14.* compared with *Romans ix. 33. 1 Peter ii. 8.*

And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness

meekness and fear] By the hope that is in the saints, is not designed, the grace of hope itself, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration; the reason, ground, and foundation of which are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Christ, and his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and redemption; but the Gospel, the whole christian doctrine of faith, and which the Syriac version here calls, "the hope of faith;" and the profession of christianity, called in Heb. x. 23. *the profession of hope*; in which persons profess their hope of eternal life and happiness through Christ, as the doctrine of the Gospel directs them to. Now, a *reason* of this is to be given; not that they are to account for the Gospel, upon the foot of carnal reason; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reason of men; nor is it to be thought that every christian should be capable of defending the Gospel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reasons in a disputatious way, or to give a reason and argument for every particular truth; but that he should be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the christian religion; at least, with the first principles of the oracles of God, and be conversant with the scriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reason of his holding this and the other truth, though he is not able to give a gain-sayer satisfaction, or to stop his mouth: and this is to be done, *with meekness and fear*; with *meekness*, before men; in a humble, modest way; not with an haughty air, and in a morose and surly manner, which serves only to irritate and provoke: and *with fear*; either of God, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "with the fear of the Lord;" considering the subject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it; and taking care lest the answer should be delivered in a light, trifling and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to please men, and be screened from their resentments; or with all due reverence of, and respect to men, to superiors, to the civil magistrates, who may ask the reason; for they are to be treated with honour and esteem, and to be answered in an handsome and becoming manner, suitable to the dignity of their persons and office; as the sanhedrim was by Stephen; and as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, by the apostle Paul: and this answer, or reason, is to be given to every man; that has authority to ask, and that asks in a modest manner, and with a reverence suitable to the subject; for the phrases, *with meekness and fear*, may respect him that asks the reason, as well as him that gives the answer; for that which is holy is

not to be given to dogs, to impudent persons, mockers and scoffers, nor are pearls to be cast before swine, filthy and irreverent persons; see Matt. vii. 6. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Vulgate Latin version read, "but with meekness and fear;" for if it is not asked in such a way, there is no obligation to give an answer: and this is to be given, *always*; whenever it is asked in such a manner, and by proper persons; when there is a necessity for it, and as opportunity offers: and saints should be always ready to give it; and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases. Agreeable to this is the advice of R. Eleazar (x); "Be diligent to learn the Law, and know what thou shouldst answer to an epicure," or heretic. Says R. Jochanan (a), "In every place where the Sadducees object, חסותן בידן "their answer is at their side," or ready; that is, in the same scriptures on which they form their objections.

16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Having a good conscience] Meaning not the faculty of the conscience itself, which is naturally evil, and defiled with sin, and is only made good by the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the heart is sprinkled from it, and that itself purged from dead works; but a life and conversation according to the dictates of such a conscience, in the uprightness and sincerity of it, and by the grace of God, and according to the Gospel, and whereby the doctrines of it are adorned; for, as besides internal sanctification of God, or a fearing of him, and believing in him with the heart, there must be a profession of him with the mouth, and a reason of faith and hope given verbally, when there is an occasion for it; so to both must be added a conscientious discharge of duty, both to God and men, which is one way of defending and recommending the doctrines of the Gospel.

That,

(x) Pirke Abot, c. 2. §. 14.

(a) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 38. 2.

That, whereas they speak of you, as of evil doers] As vain, proud, haughty, and arrogant persons, as seditious men, enemies to order and civil magistracy; as such that speak evil of dignities, and despise government; when they shall see your modest and humble deportment in the world, and before them, and with what reverence and esteem you treat them.

They may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ] Which was in consequence of their being in Christ, and made new creatures by him, and was as became his Gospel, and by and under the influence of his grace and Spirit.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

For it is better, if the will of God be so] For all things are ordered by the will of God, even all the sufferings and afflictions of the saints; and which is a reason why they ought to be patiently submitted to, and bore: and better it is, more honourable and profitable,

That ye suffer for well doing] For believing in Christ, professing him and his Gospel, giving a free and open reason for so doing, and for exercising a good conscience, and living godly in Christ Jesus.

That for evil doing] As a murderer, a thief, an evil doer, or a busy-body in other men's matters, chapter iv. 15, 16.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins] Not his own, for he committed none, but for the sins of his people; in order to obtain the remission of them, to make reconciliation for them, and to take and put them away, and finish and make an end of them; which sufferings of his, on account of them, were many and great: he suffered much by bearing the griefs, and carrying the sorrows of his people, whereby he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, from his cradle to his cross; and from the temptations of Satan, being in all points tempted, as his members are, though without sin; and from the contradiction of sinners against him, in his name, credit, and character, abusing him as the worst of men; and he suffered in his soul, from the wrath of God, and curses of the law, which lay upon him; and in his body, by many buffetings, scourges, wounds, and death itself, even the death of the cross; and

which being the finishing part of his sufferings, is chiefly here meant, The Alexandrian copy reads, "died for you;" and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "died for our sins;" and this he did *once*, and but once; he died once, and will die no more; he was offered up once, and will be offered up no more; there is no more offering, or sacrifice for sin; the reason is, because his one offering is sufficient to take away sin, which the legal sacrifices were not, and therefore were often offered; and the reason why this his one offering, or once suffering and dying, is sufficient, is because of his divine nature, or eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, and gave infinite virtue to his sacrifice and satisfaction: now, this is an argument for suffering patiently; since Christ, the head, has also suffered, and therefore, why not the members; and since he has suffered for their sins, therefore they should not grudge to suffer for his sake; and seeing also their sufferings are but once, in this life only, and as it were but for a moment, and not to be compared with his sufferings for them; and especially when it is considered what follows.

The just for the unjust] Christ, the holy and just one, who is holy in his nature, and righteous in his life and actions, which were entirely conformable to the righteous law of God, and upright and faithful in the discharge of his office, and therefore called God's righteous servant; he suffered, and that not only by unjust men, by the Jews, by Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, but for and in the room and stead of unjust men, sinners, and ungodly, who were destitute of righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness; and since he did, it need not be thought hard, or strange, that sinful men should suffer at the hands of others; and still it should be born with the greater patience, since Christ not only suffered for them, but since an end is answered by it, as is here suggested.

That he might bring us to God] Nigh to God, who, with respect to communion, were afar off from him; and in peace and reconciliation with him, who were enemies to him by wicked works; and that they might have freedom of access, with boldness, unto God, through his precious blood, and the veil of his flesh; and that he might offer them unto God, as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render it; as a sacrifice acceptable unto God, presenting them to him unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight; that he might bring them into his grace and presence here, and as the great Captain of their salvation, bring them to him in glory hereafter.

Being

Being put to death in the flesh] In the human nature: flesh includes the whole of human nature, both body and soul; for though the body only dies, yet death is the dissolution of the union between them both; and such was Christ's death; for though the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and soul were disunited; his body was left on the cross, and his soul, or Spirit, was commended to God, when his life was taken from the earth, and he was put to death in a violent manner by men.

But quickened by the Spirit] Raised from the dead by his divine nature, the Spirit of holiness, the eternal Spirit, by which he offered up himself, and by virtue of which, as he had power to lay down his life, so he had power to take it up again; when he was also justified in the Spirit, and all the elect in him. Now, as the enemies of Christ could do no more than put him to death in the flesh, so the enemies of his people can do no more than kill the body, and cannot reach the soul; and as Christ is quickened and raised from the dead, so all his elect are quickened together, and raised with him, representatively, and shall, by virtue of his resurrection, be raised personally, and live also; which is no inconsiderable argument to suffer afflictions patiently, and which is the design of this instance and example of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ.

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Various are the senses given of this passage: some say, that Christ, upon his death, went in his human soul to hell; either, as some, to preach to the devils and damned spirits, that they might be saved, if they would; and as others, to let them know that he was come, and to fill them with dread and terror; but though hell may be meant by the prison, yet the text does not say that he went unto it, or preached in it; only that the spirits were in it, to whom he sometimes went, and preached; nor is his human soul, but his divine nature meant, by the spirit, by which he went, and preached to them: and as for the ends proposed, the former is impracticable and impossible; for after death follows judgment, which is an eternal one; nor is there any salvation, or hope of salvation, afterwards; and the latter is absurd, vain, and needless. Others, as the papists, imagine the sense to be, that Christ, at his death, went in his human soul, into a place they call *Limbus patrum*, which they suppose is meant by the prison here, and delivered the souls of the Old Testament saints and patriarchs from thence, and carried them with him to heaven;

but this sense is also false, because, as before observed, not the human soul of Christ, but his divine nature, is designed by the Spirit; nor is there any such place, as here feigned, in which the souls of Old Testament saints were, before the death of Christ; for they were in peace and rest, in the kingdom of heaven, in Abraham's bosom, inheriting the promises, and not in a prison: besides, the text says not one word of the delivering of these spirits out of prison, only of Christ's preaching to them: add to all this, and which Beza, with others, observe, the apostle speaks of such as had been disobedient, and unbelievers; a character which will not agree with righteous men, and prophets, and patriarchs, under the former dispensation: others think the words are to be understood of Christ's going to preach by his apostles to the Gentiles, as in *Eph. ii. 17.* who were in a most miserable condition, strangers to the covenants of promise, and destitute of the hope of salvation, and sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, and as it were, at the gates of hell; were in the bonds of iniquity, and dead in sin, and had been for a long time past, foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, to which they were in bondage. This is indeed, a more tolerable sense than the former; but it will be difficult to shew, that men, in the present state of life, are called *spirits*, which seems to be a word that relates to the souls of men in a separate state from their bodies; and especially that carnal and unconverted men are ever so called; and besides, the apostle, is speaking of such who were disobedient in the times of Noah; and therefore, not of the Gentiles, in the times of the apostles: add to which, that the transition from the times of the apostles, according to this sense, to the days of Noah, is very unaccountable; this sense does not agree with the connection of the words; others are of opinion, that this is meant of the souls of the Old Testament saints, who were *in a watch*, as they think the phrase may be rendered, instead of, *in prison*; and said to be in such a situation, because they were intent upon the hope of promised salvation, and were looking out for the Messiah, and anxiously desiring his coming; and which he, by some gracious manifestation made known unto them: but though the word may sometimes signify a watch, yet more commonly a prison, and which sense best suits here; nor is that anxiety and uneasiness, which represents them as in a prison, so applicable to souls in a state of happiness; nor such a gracious manifestation, so properly called preaching; and besides, not believers, but unbelievers, disobedient ones, are here spoken of; and though it is only said, they were sometimes so, yet to what purpose should

should this former character be once mentioned, of souls now in glory? But it would be tedious to reckon up the several different senses of this place; some referring it to such in Noah's time, to whom the Gospel was preached, and who repented; and though they suffered in their bodies, in the general deluge, yet their souls were saved; whereas the apostle calls them all, *the world of the ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 5. and others, to the eight souls that were shut up in the ark, as in a prison, and were saved; though these are manifestly distinguished in the text from the disobedient spirits. The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by his Spirit, by which he was quickened, went in the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and preached both by words and deeds, by the personal ministry of Noah, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being disobedient, and continuing so, a flood was brought upon them which destroyed them all; and whose spirits, or separate souls, were then in the prison of hell, so the Syriac version renders it, *בבית הנפשות* in hell, see Rev. xx. 7. when the apostle Peter wrote this epistle; so that Christ neither went into this prison, nor preached in it, nor to spirits that were then in it when he preached, but to persons alive in the days of Noah; and who being disobedient, when they died, their separate souls were put into prison, and there they were when the apostle wrote: from whence we learn, that Christ was, that he existed in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before Abraham, he was in the days of Noah; and that Christ also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator, in his divine nature, and by his Spirit discharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature; and that the Gospel was preached in those early times, as unto Abraham, so, before him.

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Which sometime were disobedient] To all the instructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the strivings of his Spirit, and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah; they continued in their profaneness and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedness; not believing what they were threatened with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and destroy them: and this *sometime*, refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were

VOL. V.

now in hell; to the days of Noah, hereafter mentioned; and which the Syriac version connects with this clause, reading it thus, "who of old were disobedient in the days of Noah;" at which time it was, that Christ, by his Spirit in Noah, went and preached to them.

When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah] That is, when God, who is long-suffering and patient, waited on these disobedient ones, in Noah's time, for the space of an hundred and twenty years.

While the ark was a preparing] By Noah, according to the directions which God gave him, Genesis vi. 14—22. and which, as R. Tanchuma says (b), was fifty-two years a building; others say (c), an hundred years; but Jarchi says (d), it was an hundred and twenty; and which seems most likely, that being the term of time in which God's long-suffering waited on them; during which time Noah was preaching to them, and building the ark.

Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water] The eight persons were, Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the Jews (e), that besides these, Og, king of Basan, escaped the flood. But this is all a mere fiction; and equally fabulous, is the account the Arabians give, who say (f), "That eighty persons, together with Noah, were taken into the ark, among whom was Jorham, their father." For there were no more than eight persons saved; and this is the apostle's sense; and agreeably, the Syriac version renders it, "and eight souls נפשות only entered into it, and were saved by water;" and we are told by some of the eastern writers (g), that when these eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called *Themanin*, which, in the Arabic language signifies *eight*, according to their number. The ark was a type of Christ, into whom, whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, shall be saved; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, so are those that enter in at the strait gate, or believe in Christ; and they that went into the ark were saved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were destroyed; as the very same thing, for different reasons, is the cause or means of destruction and salvation;

(b) In Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

Hottinger, Simgina Orient. l. 1. c. 3. p. 249.

(d) In Gen. vi. 15.

(e) Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 21. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. r. Vid. Targum Jon. in Gen. xiv. 15. & Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

(f) Pocock, Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 38.

(g) Eusebii Annal. p. 47. Elmacin. Hist. l. 7. c. 1. p. 12. Patricides, p. 10. Apud Hottinger, Simgina Orient. l. 1. c. 3. p. 251, 252.

salvation; so, Christ is set for the fall and rising of many, is a stumbling-block to some, and the power and wisdom of God to others; and the Gospel, and the ministers of it, are the favour of life unto life to some, and the favour of death unto death to others. This instance of the dispensation of the providence of God to the old world, is very appositely, though by way of digression, introduced by the apostle; shewing, that in times past, as then, God's usual method has been, to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and save his own people; and this suffering saints might depend upon would be their case, and therefore should bear their afflictions patiently.

21. The like figure whereunto, *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us] The ark, and deliverance by it, as it was a type of Christ, and salvation by him, so it was a figure of baptism, and baptism was the antitype of that: or there is something in these which correspond, and answer to, and bear a resemblance to each other: as the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's invention, so is baptism, it is of heaven, and not of men; and as the ark, while it was preparing, was the scorn and derision of men, so is this ordinance of the Gospel; it was rejected with disdain by the scribes and Pharisees, as it still is by many; and as the ark, when Noah and his family were shut up in it by God, represented a burial, and they seemed, as it were, to be buried in it, it was a lively emblem of baptism, which is expressed by a burial, *Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.* and as they in the ark had the great deep broke up under them, and the windows of heaven opened over them, pouring out waters upon them, they were, as it were, immersed in, and were covered with water, this fitly figured baptism, by immersion; nor were there any but adult persons that entered into the ark, nor should any be baptized but believers; to which may be added, that as the one saved by water, so does the other; for it is water-baptism which is here designed, which John practised, Christ gave a commission for, and his disciples administered: it saves not as a cause, for it has no causal influence on, nor is it essential to salvation. Christ only is the cause and author of eternal salvation; and as those only that were in the ark, were saved by water, so those only that are

in Christ, and that are baptized into Christ, and into his death, are saved by baptism; not every one that is baptized, but he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, *Mark xvi. 16.* for baptism is

(Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh) The design of it is to take off the sordid flesh, as circumcision did; or in a ceremonious way, outwardly, to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, as the Jewish baptisms did; see *Heb. ix. 10, 13.* or to take away either original or actual sin; this only the blood of Christ can do; and it is not a mere external cleansing of the body.

But the answer of a good conscience towards God] The Vulgate Latin renders it, "the interrogation of a good conscience;" referring, it may be, to the interrogations that used to be put to those who desired baptism; as, Dost thou renounce Satan? Dost thou believe in Christ? See *Acts viii. 36, 37.* Others render it, "the stipulation of a good conscience;" alluding also to the ancient custom of obliging those that were baptized, to covenant and agree to live an holy life and conversation, to renounce the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this world; and baptism does certainly lay an obligation on men to walk in newness of life; see *Rom. vi. 4, 5.* The Ethiopic version renders it, "confession of God;" and to this the Syriac version agrees, rendering it, "confessing God with a pure conscience;" for, to baptism, profession of faith in Christ, and of the doctrine of Christ in a pure conscience, is requisite; and in baptism, persons make a public confession of God, and openly put on Christ before men: the sense seems plainly this; that then is baptism rightly performed, and its end answered, when a person, conscious to himself of its being an ordinance of Christ, and of his duty to submit to it, does so, upon profession of his faith in Christ, in obedience to his command, and with a view to his glory; in doing which, he discharges a good conscience towards God: and being thus performed, it saves,

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ] Being a means of leading the faith of the baptized person, as to the blood of Christ for pardon and cleansing, so to the resurrection of Christ for justification; see *Acts ii. 38.* and chap. *xxii. 16. Rom. iv. 25.* moreover, the sense of the passage may be this, that baptism is a like figure as the ark of Noah was; that as the entrance of Noah and his family into the ark, was an emblem of a burial, so their coming out of it, was a figure of the resurrection; and just such a figure is baptism performed by immersion, both of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and of the resurrection of saints to walk in

in newness of life. The Arabic version renders the whole verse thus; "of which thing baptism is now a type, saving us, not by removing the filth of the flesh only, but by exhilarating a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Who is gone into heaven] After he had been risen forty days, where he is received, and will remain until the restitution of all things; and where he appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them; and is entered as their forerunner, and is preparing mansions of glory for them; and will come again, and take them to himself, to be for ever with him; and from hence they expect him.

And is on the right hand of God] Where Stephen saw him; and which is an honour never conferred on any angel, or man; and shews that Christ had done his work, and that in a way acceptable to God: the Vulgate Latin version here adds, "swallowing up death that we might be made heirs of eternal life;" but is not supported by any copy or version.

Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him] By *angels*, may be meant, angels both good and bad, who are all in subjection to Christ; and by *authorities and powers*, the kings, princes, and governors of this world, who hold their dominions from and under the Lord Jesus Christ; and which is an argument why believers should patiently bear all their sufferings and afflictions, since Christ has the government in his hands, and he rules and over-rules all things for good; and when he pleases, he can put a stop to the rage and persecutions of men; and so the apostle returns to his former argument in the following chapter.

C H A P. IV.

In this chapter the apostle goes on to exhort to an holy life and conversation, and to the several duties of religion, and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of Christ. From the consideration of Christ's sufferings, he exhorts the saints to arm themselves with the same mind, and cease from sin, and live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, *ŷ. 1, 2.* the reason, or argument engaging to it, is taken from the past time of life, in which they walked in all man-

ner of sin, and which ought to suffice, though they should be spoken evil of by wicked men for not continuing therein, *ŷ. 3, 4.* and to fortify their minds against such abuses, the apostle takes notice of the general judgment, when such persons must give an account for their evil speaking to the judge of quick and dead; and that though those to whom the Gospel is preached, and embrace it, suffer death for it, being judged of men in their bodies, yet they live to God in their souls, *ŷ. 5, 6.* and seeing the end of all things is near, he exhorts to various things, as, to sobriety, watchfulness unto prayer, and especially to fervent charity, since that covers a multitude of sins, *ŷ. 7, 8.* and to hospitality, without grudging, and to a communication of all good things, as faithful stewards of them, *ŷ. 9, 10.* and particularly to the dispensation of the Gospel, according to the word of God; and to a ministration to the poor, according to a man's ability, with a view to the glory of God, by Christ, *ŷ. 11.* and next, the apostle proceeds to comfort the saints under reproaches and persecutions, and to instruct them how to behave under such circumstances; as, that they should not think such things strange, though grievous, since they were for the trial of their graces, *ŷ. 12.* but should rather rejoice, since they were partakers of the sufferings of Christ now, and should share in his glory when revealed, which would make them exceeding glad, *ŷ. 13.* yea, inasmuch as it was for the name of Christ they suffered reproach, they ought to reckon themselves happy persons; since the glorious Spirit of God rested on them, and since the issue of it was, the glorifying of God by them, tho' he was evil spoken of by those that reproached them, *ŷ. 14.* indeed, they ought not to suffer as persons guilty of capital crimes; should they, they would have reason to be ashamed, but not since they suffered as christians; but on the contrary, should give glory to God for it, who had done them so much honour as to call them to it, *ŷ. 15, 16.* and, to reconcile their minds to sufferings, he observes, that the time was come, that afflictions should begin with the people of God, on account of which, the righteous are scarcely saved, though certainly; and that therefore, sad must be the state of the disobedient and ungodly, even of their wicked persecutors, *ŷ. 17, 18.* wherefore, upon the whole, seeing it was the will of God they should suffer, they ought to suffer patiently, and in well-doing, commit the care of their souls to their faithful creator, *ŷ. 19.*

FOrasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh] The apostle having finished his digression concerning Christ's preaching in the ministry of Noah to men, whose spirits were now in prison, and concerning the salvation of Noah's family in the ark by water; and concerning its antitype, baptism, its nature and effect, returns to the sufferings of Christ, he had before made mention of; and argues from thence, to holiness of life and patience in sufferings, after this manner; seeing then, Christ, the eternal Son of God, the Lord of glory, the holy and just One, suffered such indignities, reproaches, and persecutions from men, the wrath of God, the curses of the law, and death itself; and that not for himself, nor for angels, but for men: and these not all men, otherwise his death, with respect to some, must be in vain; but for a particular number of men, in distinction from others, described in the beginning of this epistle, as elect, according to the foreknowledge of God; and these sufferings he endured in the room and stead of those persons, in the days of his flesh, whilst here on earth, and in his human nature, both soul and body, and was crucified through the weakness of his flesh, and for the sins of our flesh, and which he bore in his own.

Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind] That was in Christ; as he suffered for you, do ye likewise suffer for him, in his cause, for righteousness sake, for the sake of him and his Gospel; and bear all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions on his account, willingly, and cheerfully, with meekness and patience, as he did, and with the same view; not indeed to make satisfaction for sin, which was his principal design, but that *being dead unto sin, you might live unto righteousness*. The apostle speaks to the saints, in this exhortation, as to soldiers, and who had many enemies to engage with, and therefore should put on their armour, and be in a readiness to meet any attack upon them.

For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin] Meaning either Christ who having suffered in human nature for the sins of his people, whereby he has made satisfaction for them, is now clear of them; the sins that were imputed to him being took and bore away, finished and made an end of, and he justified from them, and freed

from all the effects of them, and punishment for them, as from all the infirmities of human nature, from mortality and death: or, the person that has suffered in and with Christ, his head and representative, which is all one as if he had suffered himself, in person; by virtue of which, his sin ceases, and he ceases from being chargeable with it, as if he had never sinned; which is the case of every criminal, when he has suffered the penalty of the law for his crime: or else the person that is dead to sin, by virtue of the death of Christ, and in imitation of it, who has been baptized into Christ's death, and planted in the likeness of it; whose old man is crucified with Christ, and he is dead with him; who has crucified the affections with the lusts, and through the Spirit has mortified the deeds of the body; which way the generality of interpreters go: such a man has ceased from sin; not from the being and indwelling of it in him; nor from the burden of it on him; nor from a continual war with it in him; nor from slips and falls by it, and into it; no, nor from it in the most solemn and religious services; but as from the guilt of it, and obligation to punishment by it, through the death of Christ, so from the servitude and dominion of it, through the power of divine grace, in consequence of Christ's death: or rather, the believer that suffers death in his body, for the sake of Christ, such an one immediately ceases from the very being of sin, and all commission of it; he becomes at once perfectly pure, and holy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and a noble argument this is to meet death without fear, and to suffer it cheerfully and willingly, since the consequence of this will be, an entire freedom from sin, than which nothing can be more desirable by a believer: to this agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words thus; "for who ever is dead in his body hath ceased from all sins;" but the Arabic version more fully confirms this sense, and is the best version of the text, and is this; "be ye armed with this (same) thought, that (not for) he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;" that is, fortify your minds against all the fears of sufferings, and of death, for the sake of Christ, with this single thought, that he that has suffered martyrdom for Christ in his body, or has suffered death for his sake, or dies in the Lord, is free from sin, and so from sorrow, and is the most happy person imaginable; so that this last clause is not a reason of the former, but points out, and is explanatory of what that same mind or thought is, christians should arm themselves with against the fears of death; and it is the best piece

of armour for this service a faint can make use of.

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

That he no longer should live] The Arabic version reads, "that ye no longer should live." This expresses the end of being armed with the above thought, that a suffering faint after death is clear of sin; and the use that is to be made of it in the present time of life, and the remainder of it, that such a person who so thinks, and is thus guarded and fortified against the fears of death, should no more, or any longer live,

The rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God] The phrases, *his time in the flesh*, means the present time of life in the body, and is the same with those phrases, "in the days of his flesh, to abide in the flesh, and be at home in the body;" and the words of the text suppose the former part of this time to have been spent in sinful lusts and pleasures, as the former part of the time of God's elect, even that before conversion, is; and that the remaining part of it, be it longer or shorter, ought to be spent otherwise: not to the lusts of men; of wicked and unregenerate men, unconverted Gentiles; which they are addicted to, immersed in, and serve; and which they are desirous others should live in; and which are sometimes called *divers, worldly and fleshly lusts*; and are foolish, and hurtful, and deceitful, and drown men in perdition, and therefore not to be lived unto: but to the will of God, revealed in his word, and which is good, acceptable, and perfect; one part of which is sanctification, holiness of heart, life, and conversation, as also patient suffering all reproach, injury, and persecution, for the sake of the Gospel; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to study to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men, and to suffer patiently for his name sake, is to live to the will of God; and nothing more strongly should engage to this, than the consideration of a sinless life after death; see 2 Peter iii. 11—14. The lusts of men, and the will of God, being opposed to each other, shews, that the nature of man is sadly corrupted, and is opposite to God; and that the will of man is depraved, and that the desires of it are not to that which is good, but are contrary to the will of God.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness,

lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

For the time past of our life may suffice us] The word *our* is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions. The Arabic version reads, "the time of your past life;" and to the same purpose the Ethiopic version; and which seems to be the more agreeable reading, since it can hardly be thought that the apostle would put himself among the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, who had walked with them in their unregeneracy, in all the sins hereafter mentioned, and best agrees with the following verse.

To have wrought the will of the Gentiles] Or "when ye wrought," as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; "when we walked, or were walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." These converted persons in the past time of their life, before conversion, walked in sin; which denotes a series and course of sinning, a persisting and progress in it, with delight and pleasure, promising themselves security and impunity: the particular sins they walked in are reducible to these three heads, uncleanness, intemperance, and idolatry.

When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts] Which belong to the head of uncleanness, and take in all kinds of it; as fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts.

Excess of wine, revellings, banquetings] Which refer to intemperance of every sort, by eating or drinking; as gluttony, drunkenness, surfeitings, and all luxurious feasts and entertainments, attended with riotings, revellings, and obscene songs; and which are here mentioned in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and which lead to lasciviousness, and every unclean lust,

And abominable idolatries] Which some understand of worshipping of angels; but they seem rather to intend the idolatries the Jews were led into by the feasts of the Gentiles, either at their own houses, or in the idol's temple; by which means they were gradually brought to idolatry, and to all the wickedness and abominations committed by them at such times: and it is easy to observe, that the two former, *uncleanness* and *intemperance*, often lead men into idolatry; see Exodus xxxii. 6. Numb. xxv. 1, 2. Now when they walked in these things, they wrought the will of the Gentiles; they did the things which the sinners of the Gentiles, the worst of men, that knew not God, took pleasure in, and what they would have others do; and therefore, since the past time

time of their life had been spent in such a way, it was sufficient, and more than sufficient; see *Ezek. xliv. 6.* for no time is allowable for sin; and therefore it became them for the future, and in the remaining part of life, to behave in another manner; not to do the will of the Gentiles, but the will of God; to which that grace of God obliged them, that had made a difference between what they were themselves formerly, and themselves now, and between themselves and others.

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Wherein they think it strange] Here the apostle points out what the saints must expect from the men of the world, by living a different life; and he chooses to mention it, to prevent discouragements, and that they might not be uneasy and distressed when they observed it; as that they would wonder at the change in their conversations, and look on it as something unusual, new, and unheard-of, and treat them as strangers, yea, as enemies on account of it.

That you run not with them into the same excess of riot] To their luxurious entertainments, their Bacchanalian feasts, and that profusion of lasciviousness, luxury, intemperance, and wickedness of all sorts, which, with so much eagerness of mind, and bodily haste, they rushed into; being amazed that they should not have the same taste for these things as before, and as themselves now had; and wondering how it was possible for them to abstain from them, and what that should be that should give them a different cast of mind, and turn of action.

Speaking evil of you] And so the Syriac and Arabic versions supply *you* as we do; but in the Greek text it is only, *speaking evil of*, or *blaspheming* God, Christ, religion, the Gospel, and the truths of it, and all good men; hating them because different from them, and because their lives reprove and condemn them; charging them with incivility, unsociableness, preciseness, and hypocrisy.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Who shall give account to him] "To God himself," as the Syriac version reads; of all their blasphemies, and hard speeches spoken by them against God, Christ, the Gospel, and good men, and receive their just punishment. This the apostle says, to calm the minds of God's people,

and make them to sit easy under all censures, reproaches, and calumnies; and not think of avenging themselves, but commit themselves to him that will judge righteously; even to him,

That is ready to judge the quick and the dead] That is, all men, such as will be found alive when he comes, and those that have died before, who will then be raised from the dead, to receive their judgment: and by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all judgment is committed; and who is ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead, and will judge both at his appearing and kingdom; yea, the day is appointed when this judgment will proceed by him, and he is at the door; so that he may be truly said to be ready for it, as he is every way equal to it, and will finish it with righteousness.

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

For for this cause was the Gospel preached] Not for what goes before, because Christ was ready to judge quick and dead; and because wicked men must give an account to him, and therefore the Gospel is preached to them also, that they may be left without excuse; but for what follows, and which does not so much design the reason of the preaching of it, as the event consequential upon it. By the *Gospel* is meant the good news of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and salvation by him; and includes all the doctrines of grace, as of pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; and by its being *preached*, is meant, the publishing of it openly, freely, and boldly, with faithfulness, and confidence: the persons to whom it was preached,

Also to them that are dead] Not in a figurative sense, dead in trespasses and sins; though this is the case of all mankind, and of God's elect, in a state of nature, whether Jews or Gentiles; and the Gospel is preached to such, as it is ordered to be preached, to all nations, to every creature, and is the means of quickening dead sinners; and this follows upon it, that such as receive it are judged and condemned by men, and live spiritually here, according to the will of God, and an eternal life hereafter; but the word *dead* is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse, where it manifestly signifies such who had been alive, but were now dead in a natural sense, whom Christ would judge,

judge, as well as those that will be found alive when he comes; wherefore the Gospel has been preached also to them that are already dead, as well as to those who are now alive. And by these are meant, not the dead whose souls are in hell, for to them there, the Gospel never was, nor never will be preached, nor they saved, as Origen, and his followers, have vainly thought: nor the deceased patriarchs, before the coming of Christ, whose souls, by the Papists, are said to be in Limbus; whither Christ, they say, went upon his death, and preached to them, and delivered them: but these never were in any such place, but in peace and rest; nor did Christ, in his human soul, descend thither, but went to paradise: nor the dead in general, before the apostle's writing of this epistle; for though the Gospel had been preached from the beginning, from the fall of Adam, to certain persons, and at certain periods of time, yet not to all the individuals of mankind, who were then dead, especially in the Gentile world; nor the Old Testament saints in general, who were now dead, though they had the Gospel preached to them in types and figures, in promises and prophecies; nor the men in the times of Noah, to whom the Gospel was preached by him, and who, some of them, as supposed, though they were judged and punished in their bodies in the view of men, being drowned in the waters of the flood, yet repenting and believing, upon Noah's preaching to them, they live in their spirits in eternal life, according to the free mercy and grace of God; but though the Gospel was preached to them, yet they remained disobedient to it, even all of them, but Noah's family, for any thing that appears; and are stiled the world of the ungodly, and are now spirits in the prison of hell, and therefore cannot be said to live according to God in the spirit: but such are intended, to whom the Gospel had been preached, and to whom it had been effectual unto salvation; who had received it in the love of it, had sincerely professed it, and had suffered for it even death itself; such are designed who had suffered in the flesh, or were dead in their bodies, *§. 1.* who either were dead in the Lord, or especially had suffered death for his sake, as Stephen and others: and this, with what follows, is mentioned with a general view to encourage the saints to patient suffering for Christ; to fortify them against the ill opinion and judgment the world have formed of them; and to assure them, that Christ will judge his people, both quick and dead, and avenge their cause, since the Gospel has been preached to one as well as to another, and attended with the same power: the effect and consequence of which is,

[That they might be judged according to men in the flesh.] Meaning, either that such persons that receive and profess the Gospel, and suffer for it, are judged according to the judgment of men that are in the flesh, in an unregenerate estate, that is, carnal men, to be a strange and unaccountable sort of people, as in *§. 4.* to receive such a strange set of notions, so strenuously to contend for them, and so constantly to abide by them, and to debar themselves of so many pleasures of life, and expose themselves to so much reproach and shame, to such dangers, and even to death itself: one while they are judged to be by these men enthusiasts, madmen, and fools; and at other times to be knaves and villains, hypocrites and deceivers; and this is the common effect of the Gospel being preached, and coming with power to any: see *1 Cor. iv. 3.* or the sense is, that such persons, according to men, or in their apprehensions, are judged of God, or have the judgments of God inflicted on them in their flesh, in their bodies, for some sins of theirs; and therefore they suffer what they do in the flesh, vengeance pursuing them; being ignorant that when they are judged, as they reckon it, they are only chastened by the Lord in a fatherly way, that they might not be eternally condemned with the world, *1 Cor. xi. 32.* or else, to compleat the sense, for all may be taken into it, these persons who were formerly alive, but now dead, and had embraced and professed the Gospel preached to them, were judged, and condemned, and put to death in the flesh, according to the will of wicked men, and which was all that they were capable of; though this was their case, though they were thus judged, censured, and condemned,

[But live according to God in the Spirit.] Though, whilst they were here on earth, the Gospel preached to them had such an effect upon them, as to cause them to live spiritually, to live by faith on Christ, to live a life of holiness from him, and communion with him, and to live according to the will of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and now, though dead in their bodies, they live in their spirits or souls, an eternal life of comfort, peace, pleasure, and happiness with God, according to his eternal purpose, unchangeable covenant, promise, grace, and love.

7 But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

[But the end of all things is at hand.] With respect to particular persons, the end of life, and which is the end of all things in this world to a man, is near at hand; which is but as an hand's breadth.

breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, and is but as a vapour which appears for a while, and then vanishes away. Or this may be said with regard to the Jews, the end of their church, and civil state was near at hand, of their sacrifices, temple, city, and nation; or with respect to the whole universe, to the scheme and fashion of this world, which will soon be gone, though the substance will abide; when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth and all therein will be burnt up; when there will be an end of all the purposes and promises of God respecting the present state of things concerning his church and people, and of the judgments of God upon his enemies here; when the man of sin will be destroyed, and the wickedness of the wicked will be come to an end, and the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions of the saints will be no more; and when will be an end put to the present dispensation of things; there will be an end of the ministry of the word, and of the administration of ordinances; time will be no more, and the final state of both good and bad men will take place: this may be said to be *at hand* in the apostle's time, though so long ago, because that was the last time, and the last dispensation of things; and whereas they knew not the exact time when it would be, they frequently spoke of it as near, in order to stir up the saints to the more diligent discharge of duty, and fervent exercise of grace, as here.

Be ye therefore sober] Or *temperate*; as the Arabic version renders it; and so is opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which is an abuse of the creatures of God, and unfits a man for the duties of religion; when Satan easily gets an advantage, and is often the cause of other sins, and is frequently dissuaded from, for the same reason as here; see 1 Cor. vii. 31. Luke xxi. 34, 35. or *chaste*, as the Syriac version; and so is opposed to immodesty in words, actions, or apparel, in which sense sobriety is used in 1 Tim. ii. 9. or *prudent*, as the Vulgate Latin version; and is opposed to all self-conceit and vanity of mind, and imprudence in conduct and conversation; see Rom. xii. 3. and to all immoderate care of the world, which has the same effect upon the soul, as surfeiting and drunkenness on the body: it hinders the soul in the service of God, chokes the word, and makes it unprofitable, and runs men into many sins, snares, and temptations; and the consideration of the end of all things being at hand, should draw men off from it. It may also signify soundness of mind and judgment, in the doctrines of faith, which are words of truth and soberness; and the rather this may be ex-

horted to, since towards the close of time there will be little of the doctrine of faith in the earth, and men will not be able to endure sound doctrine: it follows,

And watch unto prayer] Watch all opportunities of praying, or of attendance on that ordinance, both in private and in public; watch and observe both your present wants, and present mercies, that ye may know what to pray for, and what to return thanks for; and that you have a due reverence of the divine majesty, into whose presence you are entering. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "watch, or be awake in prayers;" be careful that you lift up your hearts with your hands to God; that you pray for such things as are agreeable to the reveal will of God; that you pray in faith, and lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and watch for the Spirit of God to enlarge your hearts in prayer, and to assist you both as to the matter and manner of praying. And persons should also watch after prayer for a return of it; and that they do not depend upon the duty performed; and that they are not negligent to return thanks for the mercy prayed for, when received. Very rightly does the apostle join the above exhortation with this, since a man that is not sober, is neither fit to watch, nor pray; and a drunken man, according to the Jewish canons, might not pray (1).

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves] Not but that charity, or love, is to be exercised towards all men, even towards enemies, but more especially towards the saints, and that under such a consideration in which it cannot be exercised towards others; namely, as their brethren in Christ, and as belonging to him, as the children of God, as redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit; and these not only such as are of the same nation, and belong to the same particular church and community, or of the same denomination, but all the saints every where, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever name, and in whatsoever state and condition: and this love ought to be mutual and reciprocal, and to be warm and fervent, and not lukewarm and indifferent, as it too often is; and should be "constant, continued, and perpetual," as the Vulgate

(1) T. Hieros. Taramot, fol. 40. 4. 7id. Maimon. Hilkot Te-philla, c. 4. §. 17.

gate Latin and Arabic versions here read : and this the apostle exhorts to above all things else ; since outward sobriety, and watchings, and prayer, and all other duties, are nothing without this ; this is the sum and substance of the law, and the fulfilling of it ; and without this a mere knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, are in vain, and therefore in the first place to be attended to. And especially for the following reason,

For charity shall cover the multitude of sins] Referring to *Prov. x. 12.* not a man's own sins, but the sins of others ; and not from the sight of God, for from that only the blood and righteousness of Christ covers sins, even all the sins, the whole multitude of the sins of God's elect ; but from the sight of men, both of those against whom they are committed, and others ; since charity, or true love, thinks no ill, but puts the best constructions upon the words and actions of fellow-Christians, and does not take them up, and improve and exaggerate them, but lets them lie buried in oblivion : it takes no notice of injuries, offences, and affronts, but overlooks them, bears with them, and forgives them, so that they are never raked up, and seen any more ; which prevents much scandal, strife, and trouble. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, *covereth*, as in *Prov. x. 12.*

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

Use hospitality] Or “ be lovers of strangers,” as the phrase may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version ; that is, such as are of a distant country, or come from afar, and are unknown by face ; especially good men, that are obliged to remove from their native country for the sake of religion, or by one providence or another ; and these are to be loved : and love is to be shewn them, both negatively, by not vexing them, and making them uneasy in body or mind ; by not oppressing them by violence and injustice, and making any exorbitant demands upon them ; or by not perverting judgment with respect to them ; and positively, by directing, counselling, and advising them, and if need be, by giving them food, and raiment, and lodging : and it is what men have been led to by the very light of nature, as in the instances, of Jethro the Midianite, towards Moses, and the inhabitants of Melita with Publius, the chief man of the island, towards the apostle Paul, and his company ; and is what God enjoined the Israelites by divers laws, since they

had been strangers in the land of Egypt ; and various are the exhortations to it in the New Testament ; and some, by the practice of it, have entertained angels unawares, as Abraham and Lot ; and even Christ himself, as the two disciples travelling to Emmaus ; and is what is highly regarded and commended by Christ, and the contrary is resented by him ; and therefore it ought to be used and practised frequently ; saints should inure themselves to it, be given to it, pursue and follow hard after it ; see the notes on *Rom. xii. 13.* *Heb. xiii. 2.* The apostle adds here,

One to another] Which clause is left out in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions ; the reason of which may be, because the authors of these versions might think this not so consistent with the duty exhorted to, since the objects of it are strangers ; but it should be observed, that so were these persons the apostle writes to ; see chap. i. 1. they were scattered about, and lived in different countries, and were strangers to one another, and therefore the clause is pertinent enough ; and the sense is, that as they were in foreign countries, and at a distance one from another, whenever by any providence they were brought where each other were, that they would be hospitable to one another : and that

Without grudging] Food, raiment, and lodging, or what they want, whether direction or advice, thinking it no trouble to give them either ; or *without murmurings*, as it may be rendered ; as if they were burdensome, and they were too chargeable to them, and their stay too long ; and without complaints of them, finding fault, and picking quarrels with them, and laying charges against them, in order to get rid of them. This is one branch of charity before recommended.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

As every man hath received the gift] That is, “ from God,” as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add. This is a general rule laid down by the apostle, according to which, distribution of every kind, whether in things temporal or spiritual, is to be made, even according to the nature, quality, and quantity of the gift received : the greatest gift God bestows on men, next to himself, Son, and Spirit, and received by them in this life, is special grace ; which God gives of his sovereign will and pleasure, liberally, abundantly, without the defects of men, or conditions to be performed by them ; of this kind are faith, repentance,

tance, hope, and love: the next to this is the ministerial gift, or what qualifies men for the work of the ministry; which is not any thing in nature, or what is acquired by art and industry; but is a gift of grace, which is bestowed on some in a higher, on others in a lower degree: and besides these, there are the gifts of nature and providence, as human wisdom, and the knowledge of things natural and civil, riches and wealth, and the various good things of life; for there is nothing a man has in nature, and in grace, but what is a gift to him, and what he has received: and according to the measure of the gift received, be it what it will, the exhortation is,

Even so minister the same one to another] Or to, and among yourselves; "to your neighbours or "companions," as the Syriac version renders it; if the gift be special grace, though that itself cannot be imparted from one to another, yet the knowledge of it may; and it becomes such who have an experience of the grace of God upon their hearts, to make it known, both to particular friends in private conversation, and to the church of God in public, for the use and edification of others, and the glory of God's grace: if the gift be a ministerial one, whether it be greater or less, for it is not in all alike; it is not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth, or to lie neglected, but to be stirred up, and used for the benefit of the souls of men: and if it is a temporal one, the good things of this life, according to the measure of them, that a man has, he is to minister to the supply of the poor; and as God has prospered him, he is to distribute to the necessities of others; as men freely receive, be it what it will, they should freely minister it, according to the nature and measure of it.

As good stewards of the manifold grace of God] For they are but stewards of whatsoever gifts they have; and therefore, if they would approve themselves good stewards, they should minister the same in proportion to their reception of them. Manifold and various are the graces of the Spirit of God, and the rich experiences communicated to men, which are not only for themselves, but for the good of others also: gifts for public usefulness are different one from another; one man has one gift, and another has another; or the same gift is not alike in all, in some greater, and in others less; and all are but stewards; they are accountable for them, and the use of them, to their great Lord and Master: and various are the doctrines of the grace of God; of the grace of the Father, in election, in the everlasting cove-

nant, in the mission of his Son, in the free justification of sinners by his righteousness, in the free and full pardon of all their sins, in the adoption of any into his family, and in the gift of eternal life; and of the Son of God, in engaging as the surety of his people from everlasting, in assuming their nature in time, in obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and of the Spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification; and of all these mysteries of grace the ministers of the Gospel are stewards; and it is required of them that they be faithful. Temporal good things are given to men, not for their own use only, but for others; and they are but stewards of them; the original proprietor is God, and to him they must give an account of their stewardship, and how they have used and disposed of the manifold gifts which God of his goodness has put into their hands; so that this last clause contains a reason or argument enforcing the above rule.

11. If any man speak, *let him speak as the oracles of God*; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God] This is an application of the above general rule to a particular case, the public ministry of the word, for that is here meant: *if any man speak*; not in any manner, or on any subject; not in a private way, or about things natural and civil; but in public, and concerning divine things: *let him speak*; this is rightly supplied in our translation; and in which it is supported and confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions, who both supply the same way: *as the oracles of God*; by which are meant the writings of the Old Testament, the sacred scriptures; see *Romans* iii. 2. so called, because they come from God, are breathed and spoken by him, and contain his mind and will, and are authoritative and infallible; and according to these he is to speak, who speaks in public on divine subjects, both as to the matter and manner of his speech: the matter of it must be agreeable to the divinely inspired word of God, must be fetched out of it, and confirmed by it; and he is to speak every thing that is in it, and keep back nothing, but declare the whole counsel of God; and only what is in it, without mixing his own chaff, or the doctrines of men with it; and it should be spoken in a manner

a manner agreeable to it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words of the holy Ghost; and with all boldness, for so the Gospel ought to be spoken; and with all certainty and assurance, constantly affirming the things of it, for nothing is more sure than they are; and with all openness, plainness and freedom, making truth manifest, laying it plain and open before men, as it ought to be; and that with all reverence and godly fear, which becomes both speaker and hearer. The apostle next proceeds to mention another case, to which the above rule is applicable.

If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth] That is, if any man minister in temporal things to the supply of the poor; if a private man, and in a private way, let him do it in proportion to his ability, as God has prospered him in the world; or if any officer of the church, a deacon, and which seems to be the sense, for so the word used signifies, *diakonos*, if any man perform the office, or act the part of a deacon, let him do it according to what God, in his providence, has put into his hands; that is, of the church's stock, which he should minister with simplicity and cheerfulness. A like division of church offices into public preaching of the word, and ministering to the wants of the poor, is here made, as in *Romans xii. 6, 7, 8*. The end of all this is,

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ] Or "by all means," as the Arabic versions renders it; by all ways and methods proper; for the glory of God should be the principal view in every action of life: hence the Syriac version adds to the phrase, "in all things," for the sake of explanation, "which ye do;" by sobriety, by prayer, by watching unto it; by exercising fervent charity, and using hospitality one to another; by ministering the gift as it is received; by the public ministration of the word; and by supplying the wants of the poor, whether in a personal, or in a church way: or in all gifts, whether private or public, temporal or spiritual, since they all come from God, and men are accountable to him for them; and therefore should be used so as to glorify him by them, and give him the glory of them; and not glory in them, as if not received from him: or in all the members of the church, whether officers, as pastors and deacons, or private christians; all should so behave in their respective stations, as God may have glory: *through Jesus Christ*; through whom all grace is communicated, by whom all gifts are bestowed, and by virtue of grace and strength re-

ceived from him, every good work is performed to the glory of God.

To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever] Meaning either to God the Father, from whom every good gift comes; who is the God of all grace, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; and therefore the praise and glory of all belongs to him; and who has the dominion over all creatures and things, and has the disposal of all in nature, providence, and grace: or to Jesus Christ, out of whose fulness manifold grace, grace for grace is received; and who having ascended on high, has received gifts for men, and gives them to them, and so is worthy of all praise; and who, as God, has the kingdom of nature and providence, equally with the Father, and as Mediator, the kingdom of grace, the government of the church; and whose dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and of whose kingdom there will be no end.

Amen] So let it be, so shall it be.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial] By which may be meant either the destruction of Jerusalem, which was at hand, and of which the apostle may be thought to give the Jews, he writes to, notice of beforehand; that they might be prepared for it, and not be overwhelmed with consternation and amazement, when they should hear of it; who, though in other countries, must be affected with it, and would be a trying dispensation to them: or else the afflictions and persecutions which daily come upon them for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; signified by *fire or burning*, because grievous to the flesh, and gave great uneasiness, distress, and pain to it; and because of the fury of men, and the violence and fierceness of their rage, expressed thereby; as also because the people of God, under them, are sometimes ready to conceive, that the wrath of God is poured out, like fire, upon them. But the apostle would not have these saints entertain any such thoughts, and therefore he calls them *beloved*; that is, of God, as they were notwithstanding all the fiery trials and afflictions which were brought upon them; or he means, that they were beloved by him, and dear unto him and other saints, though they were ill treated and reproached by the world: the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "my beloved;" and the

Ethiopic version, "our brethren:" and the apostle exhorts them not to look upon their afflictions, that either did or should attend them, as strange and uncommon things; since afflictions, of whatsoever kind, are not things of chance, and do not rise up out of the dust, but are by the appointment, and according to the will of God; and are also the common lot of the people of God in all ages, from the beginning of the world, the same afflictions are accomplished in others; yea, Christ himself endured the same hatred, reproach, and contradiction of sinners, against himself; and they are what he has given his people reason to expect, having told them of them beforehand, that they might not be offended at them; and as they lay in his way to glory, it need not seem strange, that the saints also should, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom. Moreover, this fiery dispensation, be it what it will, was not to destroy them, but to try them, and that for their good, profit, and advantage; just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, and lose their dust, and become purer and brighter.

Which is to try you] Afflictions try the graces of the saints; as their faith in Christ, which becomes thereby much more precious than of gold that perisheth; and their love to him, by which it appears, that no tribulation can separate them from it, nor many waters and floods of afflictions drown it; and their hope of eternal life, which grows more lively and strong, and is as an anchor, sure and steadfast, amidst the greatest storms. These try a man's profession of religion, whether it is took up on good principles, and without sinister views; since, if it is not, when persecution because of the word comes, he is offended and gone; and likewise, what a man's principles are, whether worth suffering for or no; and whether they will bear him up, and he abide by them, when called to suffer for them; and therefore, since such ends are answered by fiery trials, they should not be looked upon as strange and unusual things,

As though some strange thing happened unto you] Which was never known and heard of before; and as if useless, and of no service, and as foreign to the characters, cases, and circumstances of the saints in this world. The apostle in this verse returns to his former argument, to animate and encourage the saints in suffering afflictions patiently for righteousness sake.

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's

sufferings] Not of his personal sufferings; though they were partakers of the benefits and blessings which come through them, and result from them, such as justification, peace, and pardon, and which are matter and ground of rejoicing; but of the sufferings of his body, the church, which is mystically himself; and are called his, because of the union between him and his people, and the sympathy he bears to them, and because they are endured for the sake of him and his Gospel; and conform the saints, and make them like unto him; and therefore suffering saints should rejoice in this, that their sufferings are accounted by Christ as his own, who in all their afflictions is afflicted; and that they are honoured to suffer for his name's sake, and are hereby made like unto him.

That when his glory shall be revealed] The glory of his divine nature, as the only-begotten Son of God, in which he will come and appear at the last day; and which, though incommunicable, will be more manifest to all men, and especially to the saints, who will know more of him, as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and when the glory of his office, as Mediator, will be more conspicuous, and shall be beheld by all that the Father has given to him; and also the glory of his human nature, which is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God; and likewise the glory which he has in his hands for his people, even eternal glory and happiness: this is now, in a great measure, unseen, but it will then be revealed, both to the saints, and in them; they will appear with Christ in glory, and have a glory both upon their souls and bodies. As they suffer with him, and for his sake, they will be glorified with him, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels: the consideration of which, as it must greatly encourage to suffer for his sake, so must be matter of great joy, as follows.

Ye may be glad also with exceeding joy] A joy unspeakable, and full of glory, being made partakers of the glory of Christ, either in beholding, or in possessing it.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ] For being called by his name; for bearing the name of christians; for believing in him, and professing him;

him; and for the sake of his Gospel, which is sometimes called his name, *Acts* ix. 15. not that the apostle makes any doubt of this, for nothing is more certain, than that the saints shall be reproached, and all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name sake; but he supposes it, and takes it for granted, that they are, and will be reproached, and yet pronounces them blessed persons.

Happy are ye] Some supply it, "shall ye be," as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, in the other world, because the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life and glory, belongs to such persons; they will be happy at death, in judgment, and to all eternity: others, with our translators, supply, *are ye*, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; for such are happy now in themselves, being both comfortable in their frames, and honourable in their persons and characters, however uncomfortable, miserable, and dishonourable they may appear to the men of the world.

For the Spirit of glory and of God, resteth upon you] Alluding to *Isaiab* xi. 2. that is, "the glorious Spirit of God," as the Syriac version renders it; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, being possessed of the same glorious divine essence with the Father and Son; and in his works, both of nature, being equally concerned with the other persons in the Godhead in the works of creation and providence, and also of grace, especially the latter; and in all his gifts and graces with which he adorns the saints, and makes them glorious: and his resting on them, denotes his inhabitation in them, and his abiding with them, and remaining in them; and which appears by the comfort they enjoy in their souls, amidst all the reproaches and revilings of men, and by the strength which they have to bear up under, and endure shame and persecution for the sake of Christ; and which casts an honour upon them, and makes them both glorious and cheerful. The Jews have a saying (*u*), that "the holy Ghost does not dwell on any, but on him that has a cheerful heart."

On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified] On the part of the revilers, the person, office, work, and grace, the operations and influences of the Spirit, are blasphemed and ridiculed; the power of the Spirit, with which the saints speak, the experiences of grace they express, the comforts of the Spirit they declare that they enjoy under suffering circumstances, as well as the courage, patience, and cheerfulness, he gives them, are generally bantered by per-

secutors; and indeed, all the reproaches they cast upon the people of God fall upon the Spirit of God, by whom they are animated and influenced: but, on the part of the sufferers, he is glorified; inasmuch as they continue to bear a testimony to his grace, depend upon his strength, and ascribe all their comfort and gracious experience unto him. This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in all Beza's Greek copies, excepting one; and is also in the Arabic version.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other mens' matters.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer] The punishment for murder was death, by the law of God, *Gen.* ix. 6.

Or as a thief] Whose fine or mulct, according to the Jewish law, was a fivefold or fourfold restitution, according to the nature of the thing that was stolen, *Exod.* xxii. 1.

Or as an evil-doer] A breaker of any of the laws of God or men, which are of a moral nature, and for the good of civil society.

Or as a busy-body in other mens' matters] Or "as a bishop in another man's diocese;" that concerns himself in things he has nothing to do with, and neglects his own affairs, and lives in idleness, and upon the spoil of others; or takes upon him to manage, direct, order, and command other mens' servants, or persons that do not belong to him, to do his business, or whatsoever he pleases. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a desirer of others goods;" and the Ethiopic version, "a covetous desirer of others things;" and so is led on by an insatiable thirst for them, to obtain them in an evil way, either by secret fraud, or open violence and oppression. To suffer in any such cases is scandalous and dishonourable, and unbecoming the character of a christian. This last clause is left out in the Syriac version.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian] Because he is one, and professes himself to be one. This name was first given to the disciples at Antioch, either by themselves or by the Gentiles; however, it being agreeable to them, was retained; it is only mentioned here, and in *Acts* xi. 26. and chap. xxvi. 28.

Let him not be ashamed] Neither of Christ, and his Gospel, for which he suffers, nor of the name he

he bears, nor of the punishment he endures, however ignominious and shameful it may be among men; but let him, as his Lord and Master did, endure the cross, and despise the shame, *Hebrews* xii. 2.

But let him glorify God on this behalf] That he bestows this gift upon him, to suffer for Christ, as well as to believe in him; and that he does him so much honour to call him to such service, and to strengthen him in it, so as to take it joyfully, and endure it patiently and cheerfully. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of, *in this behalf*, read, "in this name;" that is, of a christian.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God] By *the house of God* is either meant the temple at Jerusalem, which is often so called, because it was built for God, and where were the symbol of his presence, and his worship; and now the time was come, or at hand, that God would begin at his sanctuary, and leave this house desolate, and not one stone should be left upon another, as Christ had foretold: or else the church of God, which is frequently called *the house of God*, because it is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his gracious presence, and which he beautifies, fills, repairs, and defends; and so may design believers in Christ, those that are of the household and family of God: and by *judgment* is meant, not punishment for sin, strictly speaking, because Christ has endured this in the room and stead of his church and people, and therefore in justice cannot be inflicted on them; but afflictions and persecutions, and which are fatherly chastisements, and different from God's judgments on the world, and condemnation with it; see *1 Cor.* xi. 32. and these may be said to *begin* with them, because it is only in this life the saints have their afflictions; and which are in love to them, and therefore are betimes brought upon them to try them, and purge them, and make them partakers of his holiness: besides, wicked men are often made use of as instruments, by which God chastises his people; upon which account they are reserved till last, to be the objects of his vengeance, when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and then what is begun in love at the house of God, will end in wrath and severe punishment on them: and whereas it is said, *the time is come*, or at hand, it may be ob-

served, that as God has his set time to favour his Zion, so likewise to chastise her; all his peoples times are in his hand, as of comfort, so of temptation, affliction, and persecution. The first times of christianity, or of the preaching of the Gospel, were times of trouble and distress; for as it was necessary the Gospel should be confirmed by signs and wonders, so that it should be tried and proved by the sufferings of the saints for it: and the phrase also suggests, that these sufferings and afflictions were but for a time, and even as it were for a moment, for a little while; and is a reason why the saints should glorify God, as these words imply, being introduced with the causal particle, *for*; that they have their sufferings now, and not with the wicked in the world to come, which will have no end.

And if it first begin at us] Either us Jews, for Peter, and those he writes to were such; or us christians, who believe in Christ, have embraced his Gospel, and profess his name.

What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? Of which God is the author, and which contains things relating to him; as, the grace of God, the righteousness of God, peace with him, pardon from him, justification before him, and acceptance with him; and which he commits to men, and qualifies them for preaching it, and succeeds the ministry of it; and it being his Gospel, as it makes it the more valuable in itself, so it is to be had in the greatest reverence and esteem; and the greater is the sin of such who despise, and reject it, as did the unbelieving Jews, who seem chiefly designed here; it was first preached to them, but they disbelieved the doctrines of it, and submitted not to its ordinances, and rejected Christ, the Saviour, the sum and substance of it; and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and what shall the end of such be? In this world wrath came upon them to the uttermost, ruin upon their nation, city, and temple; and in the world to come, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and eternal vengeance in flames of fire. The Jews have various phrases, and frequent expressions in their writings, which resemble these, and serve to illustrate them. Says R. Jonathan (a), "Punishment does not come into the world, but in the time that the wicked are in the world; and it does not begin (that is, at them) *אלא מן העוונות* " but it begins at the righteous;" and again (p), "When God executes judgment on the righteous,"

(a) T. Bsb. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 1. Caphtor, fol. 70. 2.

(p) Jarchi in Num. 179. apud Grotium in loc.

ous, he is praised; for if he executes this on them, how much more on the ungodly?" see *Isaiah* x. 11, 12. *Jer.* xxv. 29. and chap. xlix. 12. *Ezek.* xix. 6.

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

And if the righteous scarcely be saved] Reference is had to *Proverbs* xi. 31. where in the Septuagint version are the same words as here; *the righteous* are such, not who are so in their own opinion, or merely in the esteem of others, nor on account of their civility, morality, and external righteousness before men, or by the deeds of the law; but who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: and such are *scarcely saved*; not as if they were but in part saved, for they are completely saved; Christ has wrought out and finished a complete salvation for them; and they are saved from all enemies, and every thing that might hurt them; from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death; and they are completely justified, and have all their sins pardoned, and shall be perfectly saved: nor as if their salvation was doubtful; for though they are scarcely, yet certainly saved; for they are chosen to salvation; and Christ has obtained it for them, and they have the application of it already made to them by the blessed Spirit; and being justified, or made righteous persons, nothing is more certain than that they shall be glorified: but they are said to be *scarcely saved*, because of the difficulty of it, both with respect to Christ, who met with difficulties in working out their salvation; by reason of the strictness of divine justice, and the demands of the righteous law, which would make no abatement; the sins of his people he had to bear, and make atonement for; the many enemies he had to grapple with, and the accursed death of the cross he had to undergo; though they were such he was able to surmount, and did: and especially with respect to the saints themselves; for though their salvation is certain and complete, being finished by Christ, yet their enjoyment of it is attended with many difficulties; by reason of the corruptions of nature, a law in their members, warring against the law of their minds; the frequent temptations of Satan, who seeks to devour them, and their wrestlings with principalities, and powers, which are above their match; and also by reason of various afflictions and persecutions, and many tribulations, which make their way to eternal life a strait way, and through which they must enter into the kingdom of heaven: and if this be their case, as it is,

Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?] The profane sinner, the christless, impenitent, unbelieving, and unregenerate man; otherwise, all men are sinners in themselves; but here it means, such as are destitute of the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, and the justifying righteousness of Christ, and that live and die in their sins: where shall such appear? Not in the congregation of the righteous; nor at the right hand of Christ; nor in heaven, into which no defiled sinner shall enter: nor even on earth, among and under the rocks and mountains, which will not be able to hide them from the face of the Judge, and his wrath, when he shall come; but at Christ's left hand, and in hell, and among the devils and damned there.

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God] This is the conclusion made from the foregoing premises; that seeing the state and condition of the saints in this world, at worst, and which is but for a time, is infinitely preferable to the dreadful state and condition of disobedient persons, ungodly men, and sinners, and which will endure to all eternity; they should not think strange of their sufferings, or complain of them, but patiently endure them; and especially when they consider that these are not the effects of chance, or merely owing to the malice and wickedness of men, or to any second cause only; but they are the will of God, are by his appointment, under his direction, and by his order, and for their good, and his own glory; and therefore it becomes them to

Commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator] And which is not only their duty, but their privilege: and the sense is, that when they are called to suffer for Christ, they should commit their cause to God, who, as he is the creator, is the governor of the universe, and will judge righteously; and when they are even called to lay down their lives for his sake, they shall not lose them; though their bodies are killed, they may and should commit their souls, when departing from their bodies, into the hands of God; as Stephen, the first martyr, committed his into the hands of Christ, in imitation of him; where he that made them, as he is able to keep them, will faithfully preserve them in happiness and glory till the resurrection-morn, when their bodies shall be raised and re-united to them: and this is to be performed, *in well-doing*; for

for which they suffer, and in which they should continue to the last; not rendering evil for evil, but blessing; and in imitation of Christ, and his servant Stephen, pray for their worst enemies, and wish them all the good, and do them all the acts of kindness that lie in their power.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter, the apostle first exhorts pastors and members of churches to their respective duties, as such; and then to those which were common to them all, as christians; and closes the epistle with prayers for them, salutations of them, and with his apostolic benediction. He begins with the pastors, or elders, and describes himself as a fellow-elder, an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of his glory, *ŷ. 1.* and these he exhorts to feed the flock of God, where they were; to take the charge and oversight of them, freely, readily, and willingly, and not through force or covetousness; and not to exercise a tyrannical dominion over them, but to be examples to them, *ŷ. 2, 3.* and the argument made use of to encourage them to all this is, that at the appearance of Christ, the chief shepherd, they should receive a never-fading crown of glory, *ŷ. 4.* and next, the members of the churches are exhorted to submit to the rule and government of their pastors, being according to the word of God; and to be subject to one another; and particularly to put on humility, as a garment very ornamental to them; and the rather, since God opposes himself to men that are proud, but gives more grace to the humble, *ŷ. 5.* and especially he exhorts them to be humble under the hand of God, since that is a mighty one, and this is the way to be exalted in due time; and also to cast their care upon him, seeing he cared for them, *ŷ. 6, 7.* And then the apostle proceeds to the common duties of christians, and to exhort them to sobriety and watchfulness, since Satan their adversary was a cruel and indefatigable one, and ever seeking the ruin of men; and to resist him in the steadfast exercise of faith, and patiently bear all afflictions, seeing the same were accomplished in their brethren in the world, *ŷ. 8, 9.* and then he puts up some petitions for them, that they might be perfected, stablished, strengthened, and settled, *ŷ. 10.* and ascribes glory and dominion for ever to the God of grace, to whom he prays, *ŷ. 11.* after which, he names the person by whom he sends this epistle, giving a summary of it; that it was an exhortation and a testimony to the true

doctrine of grace wherein they stood, *ŷ. 12.* and next follow the salutations of the church at Babylon, and of his son Marcus to them, *ŷ. 13.* and lastly, he desires they would salute one another with a kiss of love, and gives them his benedictory wish, *ŷ. 14.*

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

The elders which are among you I exhort] The apostle returns to particular exhortations, after having finished his general ones, and which chiefly concern patient suffering for Christ; and having particularly exhorted subjects to behave aright to civil magistrates, servants to their masters, and husbands and wives mutually to each other, here proceeds to exhort elders to the discharge of their office and duty; by whom are meant, not the elder in age, or the more ancient brethren in the churches, though they are distinguished from the younger, in *ŷ. 5.* but men in office, whose business it was to feed the flock, as in *ŷ. 2.* and tho' these might be generally the elder men, and whose office required, at least, senile gravity and prudence, yet they were not always so; sometimes young men, as Timothy, and others, were chosen into this office, which is the same with that of pastors, bishops, or overseers; for these are synonymous names, and belong to persons in the same office: and these are said to be among them, being members of the churches, and called out from among them to the pastoral office, and who were set over them in the Lord, and had their residence in the midst of them; for where should elders or pastors be, but with and among their flocks? They were fixed among them; and in this an elder differs from an apostle; an elder was tied down to a particular church, whereas an apostle was at large, and had authority in all the churches; and these the apostle Peter does not command in an authoritative way, though he might lawfully have used his apostolic power; but he chose rather to exhort, intreat, and beseech, and that under the same character they bore.

Who am also an elder] Or, "who am a fellow-elder;" and so the Syriac version renders it; and which expresses his office, and not his age, and is entirely consistent with his being an apostle; for though that is an higher office than a pastor, or elder, yet it involves that, and in some things agrees with it; as, in preaching the word, and administering ordinances; and is mentioned

to shew the propriety and pertinency of his exhortation to the elders; for being an elder himself, it was acting in character to exhort them; nor could it be objected to as impertinent and unbecoming; and since he was still in an higher office, on which account he could have commanded, it shews great humility in him to put himself upon a level with them, and only intreat and beseech them; he does not call himself the prince of the apostles and pastors, and the vicar of Christ, as his pretended successor does, but a fellow-elder.

And a witness of the sufferings of Christ] As he was even an eye-witness of many of them; of his exceeding great sorrow in his soul, of his agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and of his apprehension, and binding by the officers and soldiers there; and of the contumelious usage he met with in the high priest's hall, where he was mocked, blindfolded, buffeted, and smote upon the face: if not of his sufferings on the cross; since it is certain, John was then present; and quickly after, we read of Peter and he being together, *John* xix. 26. and chapter xx. 2. and therefore a very fit person to exhort these elders to feed the churches under their care with the preaching of a crucified Christ; since he, from his certain knowledge, could affirm his sufferings, and his death: moreover, he was a witness, that a minister, and preacher of the sufferings of Christ, and of the doctrines of peace, pardon, justification and salvation through them; as appears from all his sermons recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and from these his Epistles: and besides, he was a partaker of the sufferings of Christ; he bore witness to him, by suffering for him; and, as the apostle Paul did, filled up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh; he, with other apostles, were put into the common prison by the Jewish Sanhedrim, for preaching Christ, as he afterwards was by Herod; and had, doubtless, by this time, gone through a variety of sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, as he afterwards glorified God by dying that death which his Lord and master signified to him beforehand; and therefore a very proper person to exhort these elders to discharge their work and office, and persevere in it, whatever they were called to suffer for it.

And also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed] Which some think, has reference to the transfiguration of Christ upon the mount, where Peter was present, and saw the glory of Christ, and of those that were with him, Moses and Elias, and enjoyed their company, and heard their conversation with so much pleasure and delight, that

he was for continuing there; and which was an emblem and pledge of the glory of Christ that was afterwards to be revealed, and still is to be revealed; and so the Syriac version renders it, "a partaker of his glory;" of the glory of Christ; see chapter iv. 13. or it regards the eternal glory and happiness of the saints, which is at present hid and unseen, but shall be revealed at the last time, at the coming of Christ, when he shall appear in his glory, both to the saints, in them, and upon them; a glory which shall be both upon body and soul; and this the apostle calls himself a partaker of, as in Christ, his head and representative, and because of his interest in it, his assurance of right unto it, and meetness for it, and the certainty of enjoying it; nothing being more sure than this, that those that suffer with Christ, and for his sake, shall be glorified with him. Now, the exhortation of a person in such an office, as before expressed, and of one that was an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings, and had endured so much for Christ, and had had so large an experience of his grace, and such full assurance of glory, must carry great weight and influence in it, and is as follows.

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Feed the flock of God which is among you] Some read, "as much as in you is;" that is, to the utmost of your power, according to your abilities, referring to the manner of feeding the flock, doing it in the best way they were capable of; but the phrase is rather descriptive of the flock to be fed, which points it out, and distinguishes it from all others, and for which they should have a particular regard; it being the flock, as the Syriac version renders it, "which is delivered unto you;" which was committed to their care, and they were made overseers of, and stood in a special relation to; wherefore it was incumbent on them to regard them, so as they did not, and were not obliged to regard any other distinct flock: by *the flock of God*, or, "of Christ;" as some copies read, is meant, not the whole world, which Philo the Jew (r) calls the greatest and most perfect, *το κοινον του σωτηρος*, "flock of the true God;" but the church of God, over which they were elders or pastors, consisting of Christ's sheep and lambs he ordered Peter to feed, as he now does his fellow-elders; and

(r) De Agricultura, l. 195.

and because they are the *flock of God*, which he has chosen, distinguished, and separated from the rest of the world, and has made the care and charge of Christ; put them into his hands, whence they are called the sheep of his hand; which he has purchased with his blood, and effectually called by his grace, and returned them to himself, the shepherd and bishop of souls, who before, were as sheep going astray, and folded them together in a Gospel-church state; all this is a reason, and a strong one, why they should be fed; not with every wind of doctrine, which blows up the pride of human nature, and swells men with vain conceits of themselves; nor with the chaff of human doctrines; nor with trifling and speculative notions; but with knowledge and understanding of divine and evangelical truths, with the words of faith and sound doctrine, with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; with the Gospel of the grace of God, which contains milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and with a crucified Christ himself, who is the bread of life, and whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; by directing them to his person, blood, and righteousness, to live by faith on; by preaching the doctrines of peace and pardon by his blood, atonement, and satisfaction by his sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation by his obedience and death: in short, feeding includes the whole of the pastors work, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, and the rule and government of the church, in the several branches of it; for the same word signifies to rule, as to feed; and which work is further expressed by,

Taking the oversight thereof] That is, of the flock; or "taking the care of it," as the Syriac version renders it, and adds, *spiritually*; in a spiritual manner; which is an interpretation of the phrase: an acting the part of a bishop or overseer of it, as the word signifies; looking diligently to it, inspecting into the various cases of the members of the church; using diligence to know the state of the flock, and performing all the offices of a careful shepherd; as feeding the flock, and not themselves only; strengthening the diseased; healing the sick; binding up that which was broken; bringing again that which was driven away, and seeking that which was lost; watching over them that they go not astray; and restoring them in the spirit of meekness, when they are gone out of the way; and overlooking both their practices, and their principles; admonishing and reproofing them for sin, as the case requires; and preserving them, as much as in them lies, from wolves and beasts of prey,

from false teachers, and from all errors and heresies: all which is to be done,

Not by constraint] Or with force, in a rigorous and severe manner; for this may be understood actively of pastors not forcing their flock, over-driving them, or ruling them with force and cruelty, complained of in *Ezekiel xxxiv. 4.* or passively, of their being forced to feed the flock, and superintend it; as such may be said to be, who enter into the ministry, and continue in it, because obliged to it for want of a livelihood, and not knowing how to get one any other way; or through the pressing instances of relations, acquaintance, and friends: this ought not to be a matter of necessity, but of choice; they should be induced to it by no other necessity than what Christ has laid upon them, by calling them to the work, and furnishing them for it with the gifts of his Spirit; and should engage and continue in it by no other constraint than that of his love; wherefore it follows,

But willingly] The Vulgate Latin version adds, "according to God," and so some copies; according to the will of God, and agreeable to his word; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "with equity for God;" with all uprightness and integrity, for the sake of the honour and glory of God; this should be done with all a man's heart and soul, and should spring from pure love to Christ; for no man is fit to feed Christ's lambs and sheep, but those who sincerely love him; see *John xxi. 15-17.* and from a cordial and affectionate concern for the good of souls; and from an hearty desire unto, and delight in the work itself; otherwise all he does will be as a task and burden; he will do it grudgingly, and with negligence, and will murmur under it, at least, secretly. The Arabic version renders it, "watching, not forced watches, but willing ones." This contrast of phrases seems to be Jewish, or Rabbinical (q). "בין באונם בין בראון" "whether by constraint or willingly." It follows here,

Not for filthy lucre] Not from a covetous disposition, which is a filthy one; and for the sake of gaining money, and amassing wealth and riches, as the false prophets in Isaiah's time, who were never satisfied; and the false teachers in the apostle's time, who, through covetousness, made merchandise of men, and supposed that gain was godliness; whereas there is no such thing as serving God and mammon; and as the work of the ministry

(q) T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 25. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 54. 1. & Maimon, Hilch. Issure Mibteach, c. 4. §. 5, 6.

ministry should not be entered upon, and continued in, with any such sordid view; so neither for the sake of gaining glory and applause, a pre-eminence, and chief place in the churches, and a name among the ministers of the gospel, and credit and esteem among men.

But of a ready mind] Or "from the whole heart," as the Syriac version renders it; and in a cheerful view of reproaches and persecutions, of the loss of credit and reputation, of worldly substance, and of life itself; and with a sincere concern for the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls; being ready to do every thing with cheerfulness, that may contribute to either of these. The Ethiopic version renders it, "in the fulness of your heart with joy."

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage] Or *clergy*; meaning not ecclesiastical persons, as presbyters, and deacons, who are supposed to be under the government of bishops, though not to be governed with tyranny, and in a haughty, imperious, and arrogant manner; to which sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering the words thus; "not as those who domineer over such" that are appointed in the dignities of the priesthood; "hood;" but such cannot be designed, because they are presbyters, or elders, which are here exhorted not to use such tyrannical power and authority; wherefore the flock, or church of God, the people of Christ, and members of churches, in common, are here intended: the Ethiopic version renders it, "his own people;" who are the lot, portion, and inheritance of God and Christ; and moreover, the several churches are the parts, portions, and heritages, for the word is in the plural number, which are assigned to the care of their respective pastors and elders, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot: the word *clergy* is common to all the saints, and not to be appropriated to a particular order of men, or to officers of churches; and these are not to be lorded over by their elders, in a domineering and arbitrary way; for though they are set over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them, and should be submitted to, and obeyed in their right and lawful ministrations of the word and ordinances, and are worthy of double honour when they rule well; yet they are not to take upon them an absolute authority over the consciences of men; they are not to teach for doctrine the commandments of men; nor to have the dominion over the faith of men, but to

be helpers of their joy; and are not to coin new articles of faith, or enact new laws, and impose them on the churches; but are to teach the doctrines of Christ, and rule according to the laws he has given.

But being ensamples to the flock] The Ethiopic version reads, "to his own flock;" that is, the flock of God; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, *heartily*; the meaning is, that they should go before the flock, and set an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and be patterns of good works to them, and recommend the doctrines they preach, and the duties they urge, by their own lives and conversations; and particularly should be ensamples to the saints in liberality and beneficence, in lenity and gentleness, in meekness and humility, in opposition to the vices before warned against.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

And when the chief shepherd shall appear] This is the encouraging motive and argument to engage the elders and pastors of churches to discharge their office faithfully, cheerfully, and in an humble manner; by *the chief shepherd*, is meant, Christ; who may well be called so, since he is God's fellow, and in all respects equal with him, and is the shepherd and bishop of the souls of men; all other bishops, pastors, and elders, are under him; they receive their commissions from him, to feed his lambs and sheep; are made pastors and overseers by him; and have their gifts, qualifying them for such offices, from him; and have their several flocks assigned unto them by him; and from him have they all the food with which they feed them, and are accountable to him for them, and the discharge of their office: so that Christ is the chief shepherd, in the dignity of his person, he being God over all, blessed for ever; in his qualifications for his office, having all power, grace, and wisdom in him, to protect his flock, supply their wants, guide and direct them; and in the nature and number of his flock, being rational creatures, the souls of men, even elect men; and though they are, when compared with others, but a little flock, yet considered by themselves, are a great number; and especially the general assembly will be, in comparison of the little bodies and societies of saints under pastors and teachers, of Christ's setting over them, with respect to whom, principally, he is called *the chief shepherd*, the

allusion is to the principal shepherd, whose own the sheep were, or however, had the principal charge of them; who used to have others under him, to do the several things relating to the flocks he directed, and were called *little* shepherds; so Aben Ezra says (t), it was customary for the shepherd to have under him רועים קטנים "little shepherds;" the same perhaps with the hirelings, whose own the sheep are not, *John* x. 12. who are retained, or removed, according to their behaviour; these, in the Talmudic language are called ברולי (u) or ברולי; though according to Guido (v), the word pronounced in the latter way, signifies, a chief shepherd, who takes cattle of men, and has other shepherds, servants under him; and such an one used to be called חנור חרור "the great, or chief shepherd;" so Maimonides (w) says, it was the custom of shepherds to have servants under them, to whom they committed the flocks to keep; so that when חנור חרור "the chief shepherd," delivered to other shepherds what was under his care, these came in his room; and if there was any loss, the second shepherd, who was under the chief shepherd, was obliged to make good the loss, and not the first shepherd, who was the chief shepherd. And to the same purpose, says another of their commentators (x); "It is the custom of חנור חרור "the chief shepherd," to deliver (the flock) to "the little shepherd that is under him; wherefore the shepherd that is under him, is obliged "to make good any loss:" now, such a shepherd is Christ; he has others under him, whom he employs in feeding his sheep, and who are accountable to him, and must give up their account when he appears: at present he is out of the bodily sight of men, being received up to heaven, where he will be retained till the time of the restitution of all things; and then he will appear a second time in great glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in the glory of his holy angels: and when he thus appears,

Ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away] In distinction from those crowns which were given to the conqueror in the Olympic games; which were made of divers flowers, of the olive, wild olive, pine-tree, and of parsley, and inserted in a branch of the the wild olive-tree (y), and which quickly faded away; or in allusion to crowns made of Amaranthus (z), the plant everlasting, so called, from the nature of it, because

it never fades: the eternal glory and happiness, which is here meant by a crown of glory, or a glorious crown, never fades away, but ever shines in its full lustre; and this, faithful ministers shall receive at the hands of the chief shepherd, as a gift of his, as a reward of grace; when they have finished their work, they will enter into the joy of their Lord, and shine as the stars for ever and ever; they shall reign with Christ as kings on a throne of glory, wearing a crown of glory, and enjoying a kingdom and glory to all eternity.

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:

Likewise, ye younger] Not in office, as if inferior officers to bishops were here intended, who ought to be subject to them; for elders and pastors are the same with them; nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger pastors and overseers, such an one as Timothy was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper respect had to such who are of greater age, and longer standing and experience, by younger brethren in the ministry; nor such as are only younger in years, who ought to rise up unto, and honour hoary hairs, which may be done where subjection is not required, as here; nor such as are young in grace and experience, since there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as distinguished from their officers; for as pastors and overseers were, for the most part, chosen from among those that were senior in age, so the members generally consisted of the younger sort; and besides, as it was usual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or state, *fathers*, so those that were subjects, the *younger*; see *Luke* xxii. 26. These the apostle exhorts as follows,

Submit yourselves unto the elder] Not merely in age, but in office, as before; for as he had exhorted the elders to a discharge of their work and office, he proceeds in the next place, and which is signified by the word *likewise*, to stir up the members of the churches to their duty to their elders, or pastors, who had the oversight of them; and that is to *submit* themselves to them, as in *Heb.* xiii. 17. which is done by attending constantly on the word preached by them, and receiving it, so far as it agrees with the scriptures of truth; and by joining with them in all the ordinances

(t) Comment. in Zech. xi. 8.

fol. 56. 2.

(u) In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. §. 2.

(v) Ibid.

(w) Vide Paschalius de Coronis, l. 6. c. 1. p. 339.

c. 16. p. 391. c. 18. p. 399. c. 19. p. 413.

l. 3. c. 12. p. 378.

(t) T. Bab. Bava Kama,

(u) Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 102.

(v) Bartenora in

(w) Ibid.

(x) Ibid.

(y) Ibid.

(z) Ibid.

ordinances of Christ, and their administrations of them; by being subject to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; by taking their counsel and advice, regarding and hearkening to their admonitions and reproofs, and taking them in good part, looking upon them, and behaving towards them as their spiritual guides and governors. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "to your elders;" such as were particularly set over them in the Lord, and had taken the care of them, for to no others are they obliged to submit themselves.

Yea, all of you be subject one to another] That is, all the members of the churches should not only submit themselves to their pastors, but to their fellow-members, as in *Eph. v. 21.* they should submit to the superior judgments of one another, esteeming each other better than themselves, and not be tenacious of their own way of thinking and judging of things; yea, condescend to men of low estates, and weaker minds, bear the infirmities of the weak, and take all admonitions and reproofs, given in a friendly manner, kindly; and cheerfully perform all offices of love, and by it serve one another in things temporal and spiritual; doing the meanest services for the good of each other, such as washing the feet of one another, in imitation of their Lord and Master.

And be clothed with humility] Without which there will be no subjection, either to the elders, or one another. This is a grace which shews itself in a man's thinking and speaking the best of others, and the worst of himself; in not affecting places and titles of eminence; in being content with the lowest place, and patiently bearing the greatest contempt; in not aspiring to things too high for him; always acknowledging his own meanness, baseness, and unworthiness; ascribing all he is, and has, to the grace and goodness of God, whether it be gifts of nature, providence, or grace: and this is a believer's clothing, not the robe of his justifying righteousness before God, but is a considerable part of his inward garment of sanctification, which is in the sight of God of great price; and makes a large shew in his outward conversation garments before men, and renders him lovely and amiable: it is an ornament to him, which is precious with God, and recommends him to the esteem of men, and the religion and Gospel he professes, and his profession of it. Some think there is a metaphor in the words, taken from knots of ribbands, and such like things, wore by women on their heads, or breasts, for ornament; and that the apostle's advice to the saints is, that their breast-knot, or ornament, should be humility. Others think it is taken

from a sort of badge which servants wore over their garments, by which they were distinguished; and so saints are directed to put on this badge, by which they may be known to be the servants of Christ: the former seems more agreeable: but as the word signifies to *bind*, or *fasten*, any thing, by tying of knots, it may denote the retaining of this grace in constant exercise, so as never to be without it; and to be *clothed* or *covered* with it, is always to have it on, and in exercise, in every action of life, in all our deportment before God and men, in all public and religious worship, and throughout the whole of our conversation, in the family, in the world, or in the church. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and is to be met with in the writings of the Jews. It is said (a), "He that has fear, *מִיָּדָה וּמִיָּדָה*" "and is clothed with humility;" humility is the most excellent. "The law *מִלְּבָשֵׁי מִלְּבָשֵׁי*" "clothes him with humility and fear."

For God resisteth the proud] Or *scorneth the scorners*, as it is in *Prov. iii. 34.* from whence these words are taken: the Lord treats them as they treat others; as they despise all other men and things, he despises them; he is above them, in that they have dealt proudly, and has them in derision; he eludes all their artifices, and frustrates their schemes, and disappoints their ambitious views, and scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, and brings their counsels to confusion, and opposes himself to them, and as their adversary; and a dreadful thing it is for persons to have God stand up against them, and resist them. This is a reason dissuading from pride, and exciting to humility, as is also what follows.

And giveth grace to the humble] That is, more grace; see *James iv. 6.* The first grace cannot be intended, for no man is truly humble before he has received the grace of God, it is that which makes him so; or it may design larger gifts of grace, which God bestows on those who acknowledge him to be the author and giver of what they have, and who make a proper use of them to his glory; when he takes away from the vain and ostentatious, that which to themselves, and others, they seemed to have. Moreover, God grants his gracious presence to such as are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit; and at last he gives them glory, which is a free-grace-gift, and the perfection of grace; the poor in spirit, or humble souls, have both a right and meetness for, and shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty

(a) Zohar in Num. fol. 60. 3.

mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Humble yourselves therefore] Or "be ye humbled" before God, and in his sight; quietly submit to his will; patiently bear every affliction without murmuring, repining, or replying against him; be still under the rod, and despise not the chastening of the Lord; mourn over sin as the cause, acknowledge your vileness and unworthiness, and stand in awe of his majesty, considering yourselves as

Under the mighty hand of God] A phrase expressive of his omnipotence, which cannot be stayed, and it would be madness to oppose it; and which is able to cast down the proud, and dash them to pieces; as well as to exalt the humble. This *hand* upon men, in a way of chastisement, presses sore, and in a way of punishment presses down, and crushes to pieces: but to be under it in an humble manner, is safe and profitable; such are hid as in the hollow of his hand, and are safe as in a pavilion, and comfortable under the shadow of his wings; and such humiliation and submission to him, and putting themselves under his *mighty hand* and care, is the way to exaltation.

That he may exalt you in due time] The Arabic version reads, "in the time of exaltation;" when his time to exalt is come, either in this world, or more especially at the appearance of Christ, and his kingdom. The Vulgate Latin version, and two copies of Beza's, one of Stephens's, and the Alexandrian, read, "in the time of visitation;" and so the Ethiopic version; "when he shall have visited you;" which seems to be taken out of chapter ii. 12. sooner or later such who are humbled shall be exalted; it is the usual way and method which God takes to abase the proud, and exalt the humble; for humble souls honour him, and therefore such as honour him he will honour; and this he does in his own time, in a time that makes most for his glory, and their good; oftentimes he does it in this life, and always in that which is to come.

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Casting all your care upon him] "Upon God," as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read. The words are taken out of, or at least refer to *Psalms* lv. 22. where, instead of, "cast thy burden upon the Lord;" the Septuagint have it, "cast thy care upon the Lord;" the care of the body, and of all the affairs of life, concerning which saints should not be anxiously thoughtful, but depend upon the providence of God, though in the diligent use of means, which is not forbidden, nor

discouraged by this, or any such like exhortation; as also the care of the soul, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of it, which should be committed into the hands of Christ, on whom help is laid, and who is become the author of eternal salvation; nor should this slacken and make persons negligent in the use of means, for the good, comfort, and advantage of their souls.

Far be careth for you] For the bodies of his people, and their outward concerns in life, for food and raiment for them, and for the preservation of them, who will not suffer them to want, nor withhold any good thing from them, or ever leave them or forsake them; and for their souls, for which he has made provision in his Son, and in the covenant of his grace has laid help upon a mighty Saviour; and who has obtained an eternal redemption for them, bestows his grace upon them, and gives every needful supply of it to them, and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;

Be sober, be vigilant] The apostle had exhorted to each of these before; see chapters i. 13. and iv. 7. but thought fit to repeat them; sobriety and watchfulness being exceeding necessary and useful in the christian life; and the one cannot well be without the other: unless a man is sober in body and mind, he will not be watchful, either over himself, or others, or against the snares of sin, Satan, and the world; and if he is not on his watch and guard, he is liable to every sin and temptation. The Syriac version renders the words, "watch, and be ye mindful, or remember;" watch with diligence, care, and industry, keeping a good look-out, minding and observing every thing that presents, and remembering the power and cunning of the enemy; and the Ethiopic version renders them thus, "be ye prudent, and cause your heart to understand;" referring them not to temperance of body, but sobriety of mind, and to a prudent conduct and behaviour, as having a subtil, as well as a malicious enemy to deal with.

Because your adversary the devil] He who is a defamer and calumniator; who accuses God to men, and men to God, and is therefore stiled the Accuser of the brethren; he is the saints avowed and implacable enemy. Satan is an enemy to mankind in general, but more especially to the seed of the woman, to Christ personal, and to Christ mystical, to all the elect of God: the word here used is a forensic term, and signifies a court-adversary,

adversary, or one that litigates a point in law, or opposes another in an action or suit at law. The Jews (c) have adopted this word into their language, and explain it by, בעל דין "a law-adversary," or one that has a suit at law depending against another. Satan accuses men of the breach of the law, and pleads, that justice might take place, and punishment be inflicted; and which he pursues with great violence and diligence.

As a roaring lion] So called, both on account of his strength, and also because of his rage, malice, and cruelty, which he breathes out against the saints, who, though he cannot destroy them, will do all he can to terrify and affright them; so the young lions in *Psalms* civ. 21. are, by the cabalistic Jews (d), understood of devils; to which, for the above reasons, they may be truly compared.

Walketh about] To and fro in the earth; see *Job* i. 7. as a lion runs about here and there, when almost famished with hunger; and it also denotes the insidious methods, wiles, and stratagems Satan takes to surprise men, and get an advantage of them: he takes a tour, and comes round upon them, upon the back of them, at unawares, so that they have need to be always sober, and upon their guard.

Seeking whom he may devour] This is the end of his walking about: and the like is expressed in the Targum on *Job* i. 7. and chap. ii. 2. "And Satan answered before the Lord, and said, 'From going about in the earth, למכור בעבורי' "to search into the works of the children of "men, and from walking in it;" that so he might have something to accuse them of, and they fall a prey into his hands. This is the work he is continually employed in; he is always seeking to do mischief, either to the souls, or bodies, or estates of men, especially the former; though he can do nothing in either respect without a permission, not unless he may; and though this, with respect to body and estate, is sometimes granted, as in the case of Job, yet never with respect to the souls of any of God's elect, which are safe in Christ's hands, and out of his reach; this hinders not but that saints should be sober and watchful.

9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Whom resist] By no means give way to him, by indulging any sin, or yielding to any tempta-

tion; but oppose him, and stand against his wiles, his cunning and his power.

Stedfast in the faith] Both in the doctrine of faith, which Satan endeavours to remove from, or cause to stagger in; and in the grace of faith, exercising it on the promises of God; and his perfections, particularly his power and faithfulness concerned in them, and in the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and person of Christ, which faith is capable of making use of, as a shield, to good purpose, against all the fiery darts of Satan; as also in a profession of faith, which, as it should be held fast without wavering, and which the devil is very busy to keep persons from making, or to cause them to drop it when they have made it, by violent suggestions, strong temptations, and a flood of reproaches and persecutions; all which should be disregarded.

Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world] And therefore should not be surprised and staggered by them; nor think them strange, but endure them without murmuring, and with patience and cheerfulness; since they are the same afflictions and trials, which others have been exercised with, in all ages; the same which the fraternity or brotherhood, as the word signifies, see chapter ii. 17. who stand in the same relation to God and Christ as they do, endure; yea, the same which Christ himself, who stands in this relation to them, has endured: and which must be expected whilst they are in the world; but this is the great mercy, that they are only endured in this world; there will be none in the world to come; they will be accomplished and finished here; and every believer has his measure, which must be filled up; and so has the whole body of Christ, his church, and when they are fulfilled, they will be no more.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

But the God of all grace] Who has riches of grace, an immense plenty of it in himself; has treasured up a fulness of grace in his Son; is the author of all the blessings of grace, of electing, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace; and is the giver of the several graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, &c. and of all the supplies of grace; and by this character is God the Father described as the object of prayer, to encourage souls to come to the throne of his grace, and pray, and hope for, and expect

(c) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. Bereshit Rabba, §. 82. fol. 41. 4. & Jarchi & Aruch in Mattanot Cehuna in ibid.

(d) Lex. Cebal. p. 231. 417.

expect a sufficiency of his grace in every time of need; as well as to shew, that the sufferings of the saints here are but for a while; that they are in love and kindness; and that they shall certainly enjoy the glory they are called unto by him; and which is the next thing by which he stands described

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus] This call is not a mere external one, by the ministry of the word, which is not always effectual and unto salvation; but an internal, special, and efficacious one, and which is high, holy, heavenly, and unchangeable. The persons who are the subjects of it are *us*, whom God has chosen in Christ, and are preserved in him, and redeemed by him; and who are a select people, and distinguished from others, and yet in themselves no better than others; nay, often the vilest, meanest, and most contemptible. Some ancient copies read *you*, and so do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: what they are called to, is *his eternal glory*; that which is glorious in itself, and is signified by what is the most glorious in this world, as a kingdom, crown, throne, inheritance, &c. and lies in constant and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; in a compleat vision of the glory of Christ, and in perfect conformity to him; in a freedom from all evil, and in a full enjoyment of all happiness: and this is *his*, God the Father's; which he has prepared and provided for his people of his own grace, and which he freely gives unto them, and makes them meet for: and it is *eternal*; it will last for ever, and never pass away, as does the glory of this world; it is a continuing city, a never-fading inheritance, an eternal weight of glory: and to this the saints are called, *by*, or *in Jesus Christ*; the glory they are called to is in his hands; and they themselves, by being called unto it, appear to be in him, and as such, to belong unto him, or are the called of Christ Jesus; and besides, they are called by him, by his Spirit and grace, and into communion with him, and to the obtaining of his glory.

After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you] Some copies, and also the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read these words in the future tense, not as a prayer, but as a promise, "shall make you perfect;" &c. the sense is the same; for it is a prayer, it is a prayer in faith, for what shall be done; for God will make his people *perfect*: and which respects not their justification; for in that sense they are perfect already in Christ their head, who has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and fully expiated their sins; has compleatly redeem'd

them, and procured for them the pardon of all their trespasses; and has justified them from all their iniquities: but their sanctification; for tho' all grace is implanted in them at once, yet it is gradually brought to perfection; there is a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or creature, but not of degrees; and there is a comparative perfection with respect to themselves, before conversion, or with respect to hypocrites; for perfection oftentimes means no other than integrity and sincerity; or with respect to other christians, who are weaker in knowledge and experience: and there is a perfection of holiness in Christ, who is their sanctification, but not in themselves; for every part of the work of grace is imperfect, as faith, love, knowledge, &c. and sin dwells in them, and they stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; and even the best of them disclaim perfection, though they greatly desire it, as here the apostle prays for it; and which shews, that as yet, they had it not, though they will have it hereafter in heaven, where there will be perfect knowledge, and perfect holiness, and perfect happiness. He also prays, that God would *stablish* them, or believes and promises that he would. The people of God are in a safe and established state and condition already; they are in the arms of everlasting love, and in the hands of Christ, and in a sure and inviolable covenant of grace, and are built on the rock of ages; and are in a state of grace, of justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, from whence they can never finally and totally fall; and yet they are very often unstable in their hearts and frames, and in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel; and need to be established, and to have a more firm persuasion of their interest in the love of God, and a more steady view of their standing in Christ, and the covenant of his grace, and a more lively and comfortable exercise of grace on him, and a more constant discharge of duty, and a more firm and closer adherence to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; and they will have a consummate stability in heaven, where are sure dwelling-places. Another petition, or promise, is, that God would *strengthen* them; which supposes them to be weak and feeble, not as to their state and condition, for their place of defence is the munition of rocks; nor in the same sense as natural men are, or as they themselves were before conversion; nor are they all alike weak, some are weaker in faith and knowledge, and of a more weak and scrupulous conscience than others, and are more easily drawn aside by corruptions and temptations, and are in greater afflictions: and this is to be understood, not

not of bodily, but spiritual strength; that God would strengthen their souls, and the work of his grace in them, their faith, hope, and love; and strengthen them to perform their duties, to withstand temptations, oppose their own corruptions, bear the cross, reproaches, and persecutions, and do their generation-work: and he further adds, and *settle* you, or *found* you; not that God would now lay the foundation, Christ, for he had been laid by him already in his counsels and decrees, and in the covenant of his grace, in the mission of him into this world, and by his Spirit in their hearts; nor that he would afresh lay them on Christ, the foundation, for they were there laid already, and were safe; but that he would build them up, and settle their faith on this foundation, that they might be rooted and grounded in the love of God, have a lively sense, and firm persuasion of their interest in it, and be grounded and settled in the faith of the Gospel; be settled under a Gospel-ministry, have a fixed abode in the house of God, enjoy the spiritual provisions of it, and have fellowship with Christ, and his people here; and at last enter and dwell in the city which has foundations, where they will be never more subject to wavering, instability, and inconstancy, and from whence they will never be removed; this will be their last and eternal settlement: and this will be *after* they have *suffered a while*, in their bodies, characters, and estates, through the malice and wickedness of men; and in their souls, from their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; which will be but for a very little while, for a moment, as it were; these are only the sufferings of this present time, and in the present evil world; nor are they inconsistent with God's being the God of all grace unto them, or with their being called to eternal glory, the way to which lies through them; and they are the means of perfecting, stablishing, strengthening, and settling them.

11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The Syriac version begins this doxology in the preceding verse, reading the words thus, "to the God of grace," and then putting what follows, "who hath called us," &c. into a parenthesis, connects them with these, "be glory, and power, and honour," &c. *glory* is due to God for all the grace he bestows on men; and to give it to him, shews a sense of divine goodness, and a grateful heart; and to him very fitly is *dominion* ascribed, whose kingdom rules over all, and who dispenses his grace, as well as his providential favours, in a sovereign way; and whom the saints

are in a peculiar manner, under obligation to obey; to which is added, *Amen*, signifying that so the apostle prayed it might, and believed it would be.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you] *Silvanus* is the same with *Silas*, so often mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*, as a companion of the apostle Paul; whom Peter met with in his travels, and sent this letter by him, or used him as his amanuensis, or both: his character is, that he was a *faithful brother* to those persons, to whom this epistle is written; that is, he was a faithful minister of the Gospel to them, who, with great sincerity and integrity, preached the word unto them, as the apostle was well informed, and had reason to believe; for what follows,

As I suppose] Does not suggest any doubt of it, but, on the contrary, a firm belief; for the word used, signifies to repute, to reckon, to conclude a thing upon the best and strongest reasons; though some connect this phrase, as that also *unto you*, with the following clause,

I have written briefly] As does the Syriac version, which renders the whole thus, "these few things, as I think, I have written unto you, by Silvanus, a faithful brother;" and then the sense is, This short epistle, as in my opinion it is, I have wrote and sent to you by Silvanus, who is faithful and upright, as a brother, a minister, and a messenger. The Arabic version seems to refer the above clause, *as I suppose*, neither to the character of Silvanus, nor to the brevity of the epistle, but to the matter of it, rendering it thus, "these things, in a few words, I have written unto you, according to my sense;" according to my judgment and reason, as I think, by which you will see and know my real sentiments and thoughts of things; for what I have written is according to the best of my understanding and knowledge.

Exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand] Or *have stood*, and still continue to do so: the Syriac version renders it, "I am persuaded and testify;" expressing his great confidence and assurance, that the Gospel of the grace of God, which springs from the grace of God, is full of it, and declares it, and which he had delivered in this epistle, and they had formerly received, and had stood fast in, and abode by, was the true Gospel. The Arabic version gives another sense, rendering the words thus,

"intreating and beseeching, that this grace of God, in which ye stand, may be true and firm;" that is, that ye may still continue truly to embrace and profess it, and firmly abide by it; though the meaning rather is, that the apostle bears a testimony to the truth of the Gospel, and of the christian religion, as held and professed by them, with constancy hitherto; and exhorts them unto the consideration of the truth of it, which might be depended upon, to cleave unto it with full purpose of heart.

13 The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

The church that is at Babylon] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions supply the word *church*, as we do. Some, by *Babylon*, understand Rome, which is so called, in a figurative sense, in the book of the Revelation: this is an ancient opinion; so Papias understood it, as (e) Eusebius relates; but that Peter was at Rome when he wrote this epistle, cannot be proved, nor any reason be given, why the proper name of the place should be concealed, and a figurative one expressed. It is best therefore to understand it literally, of Babylon in Assyria, the metropolis of the dispersion of the Jews, and the center of it, to whom the apostle wrote; and where, as the minister of the circumcision, he may be thought to reside, here being a number of persons converted and formed into a Gospel-church-state, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy in *Psalms* lxxxviii. 4. perhaps this church might consist chiefly of Jews, which might be the reason of the apostle's being here, since there were great numbers which continued here from the time of the captivity, who returned not with Ezra; and these are said by the Jews (f) to be of the purest blood: many of the Jewish doctors lived here. They had three famous universities in this country, and here their Talmud was written, called from hence *Babylonian* (g). The church in this place is said to be

Elected together with you] That is, were chosen together with them in Christ before the foundation of the world, to grace here, and glory hereafter; or were equally the elect of God as they were, for as such he writes to them, chap. i. 2. and this the apostle said in a judgment of charity of the whole church, and all the members of it, being under a profession of faith in Christ; and nothing appearing to the contrary, but that their

faith was unfeigned, and their profession right and sincere. This church, he says,

Saluteth you] Wishes all peace, happiness, and prosperity of every kind.

And so doth Marcus my son] Either in a natural sense, his son according to the flesh; since it is certain Peter had a wife, and might have a son, and one of this name: or rather in a spiritual sense, being one that he was either an instrument of converting him, or of instructing him, or was one that was as dear to him as a son; in like manner as the apostle Paul calls Timothy, and also Titus, his own son. This seems to be Mark the Evangelist, who was called John Mark, was Barnabas's sister's son, and his mother's name was Mary; see *Col.* iv. 10. *Acts* xii. 12, 25. He is said (h) to be the interpreter of Peter, and to have wrote his Gospel from what he heard from him; and who approved of it, and confirmed it, and indeed it is said to be his.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "with an holy kiss;" and so some copies, as in *Romans* xvi. 16. and elsewhere; see the note there; and intends such a kiss, as is not only opposite to every thing that is lascivious and impure, but is expressive of true love and affection, and is hearty and sincere: and such a love the Jews call, as the apostle does here, נשקו דרמיס "a kiss of love (i);" for as Philo the Jew (k) observes, a kiss and love differ, the one may be without the other, a mere compliment, a shew of friendship, and not arise from sincere love.

Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus] Who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and appeared to be in him by effectual vocation; and were at least by profession in him, and were in Christ mystical, and incorporated in a Gospel-church; the Arabic version reads, "who are in the love of Jesus Christ." To these the apostle wishes peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Vulgate Latin reads *grace*, which is most usual in Paul's epistles. The epistle is closed with

Amen] As is common; the apostle wishing that this might be the case, and believing that it would be.

The

(e) *Ecl. Hist.* l. 2. c. 25.

(f) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2. & Gloss. in *ibid.*

Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1.

(g) T. Bab. Kiddushin,

(h) T. Bab.

(b) Papias apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* l. 3. c. 39. Tertullian. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. Hieron. *Catalog. Script. Eccl.* 5. 2. 18.

(i) Zohar in *Exod.* fol. 60. 3. 4.

(k) *Quis rerum d. vin.* Hecet. p. 486, 487.

The Second Epistle General of P E T E R.

THOUGH there was, among the ancients, a doubt concerning the authority of this epistle, which is first mentioned by Origen (*a*), and afterwards by Eusebius (*b*) and Jerom (*c*), yet it prevailed not among the churches, nor hindered the diligent reading and use of it, together with other scriptures; it appearing to be useful and profitable, as Eusebius declares; and in process of time, this doubt was entirely removed, and it was universally received by fathers and councils into the canon of the scriptures, where it is justly retained, it having plain signatures of its divine original. Nor is there any thing in it unworthy of so great an apostle, whose name it bears; but the whole of it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to the rest of the sacred writings, particularly to the epistle of Jude between which, and the second chapter of this, there is a great likeness. The only reason of the doubt of the genuineness of this epistle, and whether it was written by the apostle Peter, is the difference of its stile from the former; but the holy Ghost, the dictator of the sacred writings, is not limited to a man's natural stile, but could vary it, as he pleased: besides, a man's stile is not the same at different times, and when writing on different subjects; add to which, that this objection can only regard the second chapter, for the first and third agree with the former epistle. And some have thought, that the second chapter is an extract out of some ancient Hebrew book describing the characters of the old false prophets; which book Peter and Jude having before them, took the characters of the old prophets, and, under divine direction, applied them to the false teachers of the present age; and if so, it is not to be wondered at, that the stile of the epistle should differ from the former, and even from itself in this part. But that it was written by the apostle Peter, not only the inscription shews, which, if false, would indeed discredit the genuineness of the book, but the account that is given of the writer of it, as one that was with Christ at his transfiguration, chap. i. 16—18. Now there were only the three following disciples there, Peter, John, and James. The last of these had been dead some time when this epistle was written, and it was never ascribed by any to the apostle John, and therefore it remains that Peter must be the writer of it. As for Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, that succeeded James, whom Grotius would suggest as the author of it, the character does not agree with him; he was not with Christ on the holy mount, nor heard the voice from heaven, asserting the Sonship of Christ, and the divine complacency in him: moreover, this epistle is called *a second epistle*, chap. iii. 1. and supposes a *first*, and manifestly refers to the former epistle of Peter's, about which there never was any doubt, as the authors before-mentioned observe. It was written by the apostle in his old age, when upon the decline of life, just as he was about to put off his tabernacle, chap. i. 13—15. a little before his martyrdom, in the year sixty-eight, though Dr Lightfoot places it in sixty-six; and it is sent to the same persons as his first, namely, to the believing Jews scattered throughout several parts of Asia, he being the minister of the circumcision; see *1 Peter* i. 1. compared with *2 Peter* iii. 1. The scope and design of it are, to put them upon a concern for a larger increase of grace and spiritual knowledge; to confirm and establish them in the present truth of the Gospel; to warn them against false teachers, which he largely describes; and he puts them in mind of the dissolution of all things, and of what will precede and follow it; from whence he draws several useful hints and inferences.

CHAP.

(a) Apud Euseb, Eccl. Hist. 1, 6, c. 25.

(b) Ibid. 1, 3, c. 25.

(c) Catalog. Script. Eccl. 5, 2.

C H A P. I.

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle takes notice of gifts of grace bestowed; and exhorts to the exercise of holiness and good works; and gives the reasons why he was so pressing to them; and endeavours to establish the saints in the Gospel that had been preached among them. In the inscription, the writer of the epistle describes himself by his names, the one given him by his parents, the other by his Lord and Master, and by his character and office; and the persons to whom he writes, are described as having faith, and that of the same kind with the apostles, and which they obtained through the righteousness of Christ, *ſ. 1.* The salutation is the same with that in the former epistle, only here is added a wish for an increase of divine knowledge, *ſ. 2.* and which might be expected, since, by the power of divine grace, every thing necessary to a spiritual and godly life had been given them in effectual vocation, through the knowledge of Christ; even exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they partook of the divine nature, and escaped the vices which prevailed in the world, *ſ. 3, 4.* upon which he exhorts not to rest where they were, but to go on in the exercise of grace, and performance of duties, many of which he enumerates, *ſ. 5—7.* to enforce which, he adds several arguments, as that through an abounding in these things they would appear not to have a superficial and speculative knowledge of Christ, *ſ. 8.* or otherwise it would be evident, that they were blind ignorant, and in an unrenewed state, *ſ. 9.* whereas by these things they would make their calling and election sure and manifest to men, and would never fall totally and finally, and in the issue have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, *ſ. 10, 11.* and then he gives the reasons of his conduct, why he so much urged a regard to these things, and put them in mind of them; namely, the usefulness of them for their establishment, the duty of his office, which required it, the short time he had to live, and the profitableness of such exhortations to them, after his decease, *ſ. 12—15.* and in order to establish them in the truths of the Gospel, and particularly in that which concerns the coming of Christ in power and glory, on which he enlarges in the latter part of this epistle; he observes, that this was not a cunningly devised fable, but was what he, and others, were eye-witnesses of, even of that which was an emblem and pledge of it; namely, the transfiguration of Christ on the

mount, when they saw the glory he received from God his Father, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be his well-beloved Son, *ſ. 16—18.* and besides, they had a surer proof of the certainty of his coming; namely, the prophecies concerning it, which should be regarded and given heed to, being as a lamp to direct in the present state of darkness and imperfection, until the illustrious day of Christ's coming appears, *ſ. 19.* and the rather this should be attended to, since no scriptural prophecy is an invention and device of men; nor was it formerly given out at the pleasure of men, but by saints, who were influenced and moved unto it by the holy Ghost, *ſ. 20, 21.*

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ] The writer of this epistle is described first by his names, Simon Peter; the first of these was the name by which he was called from his infancy by his parents, and by which he was known when Christ called him to be a disciple and follower of him, and is the same with *Simeon*; and so it is read in most copies; see *Acts* xv. 14. a name common with the Jews: the latter is what was given him by Christ at his conversion, *John* i. 42. and answers to *Cephas* in the Syriac language; and both signify a rock or stone, because he was built upon Christ, the rock, and foundation and chief corner-stone, and with a view to his future solidity, firmness, and constancy: and he is next described by his character as a *servant*, not of sin, nor Satan, nor man, but Jesus Christ, whose servant he was, not only by creation, but by redemption, and grace; and not merely a servant of his, in common with other believers, but in a ministerial way, as a preacher of the Gospel, which this phrase sometimes designs. The use of it shews the apostle's humility, his sense of obligation to Christ, and acknowledgment of him as his Lord, and that he esteemed it an honour to stand in such a relation to him: but to distinguish him from a common servant of Christ, and an ordinary minister of the word, it is added, *an apostle of Jesus Christ*; one that was immediately sent by Christ, had his commission and doctrine directly from him, and a power of working miracles, in confirmation of his mission and ministry being divine, and an authority at large to go every where and preach the Gospel, plant churches, and

and put them in due order, and place proper persons over them. This is said to give weight and authority to his epistle: and further, in this inscription of the epistle, the persons are described to whom it is written, as follows,

To them that have obtained like precious faith with us] They were believers in Christ, who had a faith of the right kind; not a faith of doing miracles, which was not common to all, nor was it saving; nor an historical faith, or a mere assent to truths, nor a temporary one, or a bare profession of faith; but that faith which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which sees the Son, goes to him, ventures on him, trusts in him, lives upon him, and works by love to him. This is said to be *precious*, as it is in its own nature, being a rich and enriching grace, of more worth and value than gold that perisheth, or than thousands of gold and silver; it is not to be equalled by, nor purchased with the riches of the whole world; it is precious in its object, it being conversant with the precious person, precious blood, and precious righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and is that grace which makes Christ, and all that is his, precious to souls; it is precious in its acts and usefulness; it is that grace by which men go to God and Christ, receive from them, and give all glory to them, and without which it is not possible to please God: to which add the durability of it; it is an abiding grace, and will never fail, when the most precious things in nature do: and it is *like precious* with that the apostles had; for there is but one faith, and which is called a common faith, even common to all the elect; and which is the same in all, not as to degrees, for in some it is strong, and in others weak; or as to the actings of it, which are not in all alike, nor in the same persons at all times; in some it is only a seeing of the Son, his glory, fullness, and suitableness, and longing for views of an interest in him; in others a reliance on him, and trusting in him; and in others a holy confidence, and full assurance of being his; but then it is alike with respect to its nature, as it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and as it works by love to Christ, and his people; it springs from the same cause, the love and favour of God, and has the same object, Jesus Christ, and is followed with the same salvation; for though it is but as a grain of mustard-seed, yet being genuine, the person that has it shall certainly be saved: wherefore, for the comfort and encouragement of these scattered believers, the apostle assures them, that their faith was the same with their brethren that

dwelt at Jerusalem, and in Judea, who believed in Christ, and even with them that were the apostles of Christ; and this he says they had *obtained*, not by their own merits or industry, but by the grace of God; for faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God, and the produce of his grace and power. Some have rendered it, "obtained by lot;" not by chance, but by the all-wise, good, and powerful providence of God, ordering, directing, assigning, and giving this grace unto them. And which came to them

Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ] Or "of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, of Christ Jesus, who is our God and Saviour: so that here is a testimony of the Deity of Christ, as well as of his character as a saviour, who is an able, and a willing one, a full, complete, suitable, and only saviour: and the reason why he is so, is, because he is truly and properly God; and why he is so to us, because he is *our* God: wherefore by *righteousness* here, cannot be meant the goodness and mercy of God, as some think, though faith undoubtedly comes through that; nor the faithfulness of God making good his purpose and promise of giving faith to his elect, as others think; but the righteousness of Christ, which is not the righteousness of a creature, but of God; that is wrought out by one that is God, as well as man, and so answerable to all the purposes for which it is brought in. Now faith comes in, or with this righteousness, as the phrase may be rendered; when the Spirit of God reveals and brings near this righteousness to a poor sensible sinner, he at the same time works faith in him to look to it, lay hold upon it, and plead it as his justifying righteousness with God: or it comes *through* it; hence it appears, that faith and righteousness are two distinct things; and that faith is not a man's righteousness before God, for it comes to him through it; as also, that righteousness is before faith, or otherwise faith could not come by it; and moreover, is the cause and reason of it; faith has no causal influence upon righteousness, but righteousness has upon faith: the reason why a man has a justifying righteousness, is not because he has faith; but the reason why he has faith given him, is, because he has a justifying righteousness provided for him, and imputed to him.

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you] By a multiplication of *grace* may be meant a larger dis-

covery

covery of the love and favour of God; which though it admits of no degrees in itself, being never more or less in God's heart, yet as to the manifestations of it, it is different, and capable of being increased, and drawn out to a greater length; or else an increase of the internal graces of the Spirit of God; as to the actings and exercise of them; or a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit, for greater usefulness among them; or a clearer view, and a more enlarged knowledge of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the truths of it; and indeed, the word grace may take in all these senses; and by a multiplication of *peace*, which the apostle in this salutation also wishes for, may be designed an affluence of all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual, external and internal; and more especially an increase of spiritual peace, a fulness of joy and peace in believing, arising from a sense of free justification by Christ's righteousness, and full pardon and atonement by his blood and sacrifice.

Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord] Which is to be understood, not of a natural, but of a spiritual and evangelical knowledge; of a knowledge of God, not as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, as in Christ, and a covenant God in him, and of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and which designs true faith in him, by which means larger discoveries of the grace of God are made, and a greater enjoyment of spiritual peace is had: or it may be rendered, "with the knowledge of God," &c. and the sense then is, that the apostle prays, as for a multiplication of grace and peace, so along with it, an increase of spiritual and evangelical knowledge; which in the best is imperfect, but may be increased by the blessing of God, on those means which he has appointed for that end, such as the word and ordinances. The Syriac version renders this clause, "through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," leaving out the word *God*, and the copulative *and*, and adding the word *Christ*; and the Ethiopic version reads "in the knowledge of our God, Christ Jesus our Lord," without any distinction. After the inscription and salutation begins the epistle, with account of various special favours bestowed upon these persons; and are mentioned by the apostle to encourage his faith and theirs, in expectation of enjoying what he here wishes unto them, since already such great and good things had been bestowed upon them.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto

life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

According as his divine power] Meaning either the power of God the Father, to whom belong eternal power and godhead; and he is sometimes called by the name of *power* itself; see *Matthew* xxvi. 64. being all-powerful and mighty; or rather the power of Christ, since he is the next and immediate antecedent to this relative; and who, as he has the fulness of the godhead in him, is almighty, and can do all things; and is *El-shaddai*, "God all-sufficient," and can communicate all things whatsoever he pleases, and does, as follows: for he

Hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness] Referring not so much to a temporal life, though he gives that, and preserves it, and furnishes with all the mercies and comforts of it; and which come to his, from him, in a covenant way, as his left hand blessings, and in great love; but rather a spiritual life, which he is the author and maintainer of, all the joys, pleasures, blessings, and supports of it, being given by him; as also eternal life, for that, and every thing appertaining to it, are from him; he gives a meetness for it, which is his own grace, and a right unto it, which is his own righteousness; and he has power to give that itself to as many as the Father has given him, and he does give it to them; and likewise all things belonging to *godliness*, or internal religion; and which is he means of eternal life, and leads on to it, and is connected with it, and has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come; and every thing relating to it, or is in it, or it consists of, is from Christ; the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exercise, are the principal parts of powerful godliness, are the gifts of Christ, are received out of his fulness, and of which he is the author and finisher; and he is the donor of all the fresh supplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to assist in the external exercise of it: all which things are given

Through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue] The call here spoken of, is not a bare outward call, by the ministry of the word, but an internal, special, and powerful one, which springs from the grace, and is according to the purpose of God, and is inseparably connected with justification and glorification; and is either of God the Father, who, as the God of all grace, calls to eternal glory by Christ; or rather of Christ himself, who calls by his Spirit and grace; and

and hence the saints are sometimes stiled, *the called of Jesus Christ*, Rom. i. 6. what they are called unto by him is, *glory and virtue*; by the former may be meant, the glorious state of the saints in the other world, and so answers to *life*, eternal life, in the preceding clause; and by the latter, grace, and the spiritual blessings of grace here, and which answers to *godliness* in the said clause; for the saints are called both to grace and glory, and to the one, in order to the other. Some render it, "by glory and virtue;" and some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, and so the Vulgate Latin version read, "by his own glory and virtue;" that is, by his glorious power, which makes the call as effectual, and is as illustrious a specimen of the glory of his power, as was the call of Lazarus out of the grave; unless the Gospel should rather be intended by glory and virtue, which is glorious in itself, and the power of God unto salvation, and is the means by which persons are called to the communion of Christ, and the obtaining of his glory: so then this phrase, *him that hath called us to glory and virtue*, is a periphrasis of Christ, through a *knowledge* of whom, and which is not notional and speculative, but spiritual, experimental, fiducial, and practical, or along with such knowledge all the above things are given; for as God, in giving Christ, gives all things along with him, so the Spirit of Christ, which is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, when he makes him known in the glory of his person, grace, and righteousness, also makes known the several things which are freely given of God and Christ: and this is what, among other things, makes the knowledge of Christ preferable to all other knowledge, or any thing else.

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Whereby are given unto us] Or "by which," that is, glory and virtue; by the glorious power of Christ; or by the glorious and powerful Gospel of Christ; and so the Arabic version renders it, "by both of which;" or "by whom," as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, by Christ; for as in him are all the promises of God, so they are at his dispose, and by him are given unto the saints.

Exceeding great and precious promises] Meaning the promises of the new and everlasting covenant, of which Christ is the mediator, surety, and mes-

senger; and which are *exceeding great*, if we consider the author of them, who is the great God of heaven and earth, and who was under no obligation to make promises of any thing to his creatures; and therefore must arise from great grace and favour, of which they are largely expressive, and are like himself; are such as become his greatness and goodness, and are confirmed by his oath, and made good by his power and faithfulness: and they are also great, as to the nature and matter of them; they are better promises than those of the covenant of works; they are not merely temporal ones, nor are they conditional and legal; but as they relate to things spiritual and eternal, to grace here, and glory hereafter, so they are absolute, free, and unconditional, and are irreversible and unchangeable; and they answer great ends and purposes, the glory of God, and the everlasting good and happiness of his people; and therefore must be *precious*, of more value and worth than thousands of gold and silver, and to be rejoiced at more than at the finding of a great spoil, being every way suited to the cases of God's people, and which never fail. The end of giving them is,

That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature] Not essentially, or of the essence of God, so as to be deified, this is impossible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are incommunicable to creatures; nor hypostatically and personally, so as the human nature of Christ, in union with the Son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him; but by way of resemblance and likeness, the new man, or principle of grace, being formed in the heart, in regeneration, after the image of God, and bearing a likeness to the image of his Son; and this is stiled, Christ formed in the heart, into which image and likeness the saints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, through the application of the Gospel, and the promises of it, by which they have such sights of Christ as do transform them, and assimilate them to him; and which resemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they shall be entirely like him, and see him as he is.

Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust] Not the corruption and depravity of nature, which is never escaped by any, nor got rid of so long as the saints are in the world; but the corrupt manners of the world, or those corruptions and vices which are prevalent in the world, and under the power and dominion of which the world lies; and particularly the sins of uncleanness, adultery, incest, sodomy, and such like filthy and unnatural lusts, which abound in the world, and among some that called themselves

themselves christians, and especially the followers of Simon Magus. Now the Gospel, and the precious promises, being graciously bestowed, and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart, and conversation, and teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such are the powerful effects of Gospel-promises, under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abstain from, and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

And beside this, giving all diligence] Or “upon this,” as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, bestow all your labour, diligence, and care; namely, on what follows, and that from the consideration of what goes before; for nothing can more strongly animate, and engage to the diligent exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, than a consideration of the high favours, and free-grace-gifts of God, and the exceeding great and precious promises of his Gospel.

Add to your faith virtue] Or “with your faith,” so the Arabic version renders it, and the like, in the following clauses. They had faith, even like precious faith with the apostles, not of themselves, but by the gift of God, and which is the first and principal grace; it leads the way, or rather the *chorus*, as the word rendered *add*, signifies; and though it is in itself imperfect, has many things lacking in it, yet it cannot be added to, or increased by men; ministers may be a means of perfecting what is lacking in it, and of the furtherance and joy of it, but it is the Lord only that can increase it, or add unto it, in that sense, and which is not the meaning here: but the sense is, that as it is the basis and foundation of all good works, it should not stand alone, there ought to be virtue or good works along with it, by which it may be perfected, not essentially, but evidentially, or might appear to be true and genuine; for by *virtue*, may be either meant some particular virtue, as justice towards men, to which both the grace and doctrine of faith direct; and indeed pretensions to faith in Christ, where there is not common justice done to men, are of little account; or, as others think, beneficence to men; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “proceed to bounty by your faith;” and faith does work by love and kindness to fellow-creatures and christians; but this

seems rather designed by brotherly kindness and charity, in *†. 7.* or boldness, courage, constancy, and fortitude, which ought to go along with faith. Where there is true faith in Christ, there should be a holy boldness to profess it, and constancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmness of mind to stand fast in it, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements; or virtue in general is here meant, not mere moral, but christian virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and of his grace; and differ from the other, in that they spring from the grace of God, are done in faith, by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ, and by strength received from him, and in love to him, and with a view to the glory of God: whereas moral virtues, as exercised by a mere moral man, spring from nature, and are performed by the mere strength of it, and are destitute of faith, and so but, *splendida peccata*, *splendid sins*, and proceed from self-love, from sinister ends, and with selfish views.

And to virtue knowledge] Not of Christ, mentioned *†. 8.* and which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Christ, where there is not knowledge of him; but of the will of God, which it is necessary men should be acquainted with, in order to perform it; or else though they may seem zealous of good works, their zeal will not be according to knowledge; they ought to know what are virtues or good works in God’s account, and what are the nature and use of them, lest they should mistake and misapply them; or of the scriptures of truth, and of the mysteries of the Gospel, which should be diligently searched, for the increase and improvement of knowledge in divine things, and which has a considerable influence on a just, sober, and godly living; or by knowledge may be meant, prudence and wisdom, in ordering the external conversation aright towards those that are without, and in shewing good works out of it, to others, by way of example, and for the evidence of the truth of things, with meekness of wisdom.

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

And to knowledge temperance] Avoiding all excess in eating and drinking, and all impure and unclean lusts; for it signifies nothing what a man knows, or professes to know, if his life is a scene of intemperance and debauchery: this seems to levelled against the followers of Simon Magus

Magus, who ascertained salvation to knowledge, though the life was ever so impure. Moreover, this may include abstinence, not only from hurtful lusts, but from the use of things indifferent, when the peace and comfort of a weak brother are endangered; for then, to knowledge must be added love, otherwise that knowledge will not be right, at least not rightly used; see 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 7, 10, 11.

And to temperance patience] Which is necessary to the running of the christian race, which is attended with many difficulties, and exercises; and under affliction from the hand of God, that there be no murmuring nor repining; and under reproaches and persecutions from men, that they faint not, and are not discouraged by them; and in the expectation of the heavenly glory: this is proper to be superadded to the former, because there may be intemperance in passion, as well as in the use of the creatures; a man may be inebriated with wrath and anger, and overcome with impatience, as well as with wine and strong drink.

And to patience godliness] Either internal, which is distinguished from bodily exercise, or outward worship, and lies in the inward and powerful exercise of grace, as faith, hope, love, fear, &c. and the Syriac version here renders it, "the fear of God;" or rather external, and intends the whole worship of God, as prayer, praise, hearing of the word, and attendance on all ordinances.

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

And to godliness brotherly kindness] Without which, godliness, or external worship, or a profession of religion, is a vain shew; for this is both the evidence of regeneration, and of the truth and power of real godliness; and also the beauty, comfort, and security of christian society and worship; and without which they cannot be maintained with peace, profit, and honour.

And to brotherly kindness charity] Or "love;" that is, to all men, enemies, as well as to the household of faith; and to God and Christ, to his house, worship, ordinances, people, and truths. Charity is more extensive in its objects and acts than brotherly kindness, or love. As faith leads the van, charity brings up the rear, and is the greatest of all.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither

be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For if these things be in you] Are wrought in you by the Spirit of God, and exercised and performed by his assistance, who works in his people both to will and do.

And abound] Increase in their acts and exercises by the frequent performance of them.

They make you] Both by way of influence and evidence.

That ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ] There is a knowledge of Christ which is barren and fruitless; and those that have it are so in their conversations, and it will be of no avail to them another day: and this is a mere notional and speculative knowledge, such as is not attended with any inward experience and application of Christ to themselves, or any fruits of righteousness in their lives, and is a bare theory of things relating to his person, offices, and works; but there is a knowledge of him that is spiritual and experimental, by which a soul not only approves of Christ, but places its trust and confidence in him, and appropriates him to himself, and practically observes his commands and ordinances in the faith of him: and in love to him, he performs the above duties, and exercises the above graces; from whence it appears, that he is neither barren, nor unfruitful himself in the profession of his knowledge of Christ; or "in the acknowledgment of him," as it may be rendered; nor is that a vain, empty, and useless thing: he is not like the barren fig-tree, or the earth that bears briars and thorns, and is nigh to curling and burning, but like a tree planted by a river of water, and is green, flourishing, and fruitful. This is used as an argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, to add to, that is, to exercise and perform the above graces, and duties, in conjunction with each other.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

But he that lacketh these things] Or in, and with whom, they are not; that is, these virtues, as the Arabic version reads, as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; where the principles of those things are not, and they are not exercised and performed, such an one

Is blind] Let him boast ever so much of his light and knowledge, and value himself upon it, and expect to be saved by it, let him live as he will; for he has no true knowledge of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as his covenant God and Father; nor does he know what it is to have communion with him in Christ; he only professes to know him in words, whilst in works he denies him; nor has he any right knowledge of Christ, only notional and general, not spiritual, experimental, particular, and practical; he does not see the Son, so as truly to believe in him; he has no true sight of his beauty, suitableness, and fulness, and of him for himself; nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his heart, whom he neither receives, sees, nor knows spiritually, any more than the world itself does; nor does he see the plague of his own heart, the corruptions of his nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; nor has he any true spiritual light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, only a form of godliness, without the power of it: and therefore whatever natural understanding of things he has, he is spiritually blind,

And cannot see afar off] At least, not the good land that is afar off, the kingdom of heaven; the invisible glories of the other world; things that are not seen, which are eternal, which one that has true faith has a glimpse and sight of; nor Christ, who is in heaven at the right hand of God, and the things of Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, carried within the veil; nor even what is within himself, the sins of his heart, the pollution of his nature, and the evil that dwells there; he sees not that he is poor, and wretched, and miserable, but fancies himself to be rich, and in need of nothing; he sees nothing but outward things, the things of time and sense, worldly and earthly things, which are near him, and all around him, which he minds, on which his heart is set, and he pursues with vigour. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "trying with the hand," as blind men do, feeling and groping to find the way; see *Acts* xvii. 27.

And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins] Not by baptism, from the sins committed before it, for that does not purge from any sins, old or new, but that which it leads the faith of believers to, for pardon and cleansing, even the blood of Christ; but this also, and purification by it, is not meant here, though generally interpreters give this as the sense, and understand it of the sin of ingratitude in such a person, who had received so great a benefit by Christ, and was unmindful of it; since it cannot be thought that one so described, as above, should ever have had his

conscience purged by the blood of Christ from his old sins, or those before conversion, unless it be by profession; and then the sense is, that he has forgotten that he once professed to have been purged from all his sins by Christ; which, if he had, would have made him zealous of good works, and put him upon glorifying Christ both in body and spirit. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and he hath forgot to purge himself from old sins;" which he would have been concerned for, had he had a true and spiritual knowledge of Christ and his Gospel, and an application of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, or had been made a partaker of the divine nature through them; see *2 Cor.* vii. 1. but the words are better rendered agreeable to the original text, *and hath forgotten the purification of his old*, or "former sins;" or "sins of old," as they are rendered by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; that is, he does not consider, nor think of it, that he was a sinner of old, a sinner in Adam, that he was conceived and shapen in sin, and went astray, and was called a transgressor from the womb; he does not think that he stands in any need of being purged from former sins; and is entirely unmindful of, and neglects the purification of them by the blood of Christ.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence] To exercise the afore-mentioned graces, and to perform the above duties, since this is the way.

To make your calling and election sure] By calling is not meant, a call to any office in the church, nor an external call, either by the voice of nature, or by the ministry of the word; but an internal and effectual call by special grace, to grace here, and glory hereafter; instead of calling, the Alexandrian copy reads, *comfort*: and by election is meant, not a national, nor church-election, but a particular and personal one; since scattered saints, and particular believers are here written to, and each called upon to be diligent to make their own, and not another's, calling and election sure; nor is a choice of persons to an office designed, seeing the apostle writes not to officers of churches in particular, but to believers in common; nor a separation of persons from the world by effectual vocation, since these two are both mentioned here, and as distinct from each other, and to be made sure; but an election of particular persons to eternal life and salvation is here intended,

tended, which is an eternal act of God, arises from his free grace and favour, and is according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and is absolute, and independent of any condition, foreseen or required in men, as faith, holiness, and good works; all which are fruits and effects, and not causes and conditions of electing grace. These may be made *sure*, not in themselves, or with respect to God, for in this sense they cannot be made surer than they are: effectual calling is according to the purpose of God, which cannot be frustrated, and is, without repentance, irrevocable, and irrevocable, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; and election stands not upon the foot of works, but upon the free grace of God, which cannot be made void, and upon the will of God, which cannot be resisted; and is also closely connected with glorification; see *Rom. viii. 30.* nor are those to be made sure by faints, with respect to themselves; for though they may sometimes be at a loss about them, and may have some scruples and doubts in their minds concerning their interest in them, and an assurance their being both called and chosen, may be after all attained unto by them; yet this is not their work, but it is the work of the Spirit of God, to certify and make sure unto them, or assure them of, their vocation and election of God: but the sense is, that diligence is to be used by the saints, to make their calling and election sure to others; not their election by their calling only, which is to themselves; for both are to be made sure, and that to others, and by some third thing; either to their fellow-Christians, which they may do by giving them an account of the work of God upon their souls, joined with a testimony of their good lives and conversations; or rather to the world "by good works," as the Vulgate Latin version, and two copies of Beza's read; or "by your good works," as the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or by the exercise of the graces, and the discharge of the duties before mentioned, whereby the men of the world may be certified and assured, by the best evidence the saints are capable of giving to them, or they of receiving, that they are the called and chosen of God, they profess themselves to be; and which is a reason why those things should be done: and another follows,

For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.] Or *sin*, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; not that they should never fall at all, or in any sense, for in many things we all offend or fall; or should ever commit any act of sin, or fall into sin, for there is no man that lives, and sins not; or that they should not fall from a

degree of the lively exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, but that they should never sin the sin against the holy Ghost, or fall totally and finally; for though they fall, they should rise again by faith and repentance, through the grace and power of Christ, who is able to keep them from falling: and besides, whilst they were exercising those graces, and doing those duties, they should not fall; for these are the means of final perseverance, and therefore the rather to be regarded. Another argument, strengthening the exhortation, follows:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly.] An abundant supply of grace and strength shall be freely afforded, to carry you through all the duties and trials of life; and when that shall be ended, an admission will be granted

Into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.] Meaning, not the Gospel dispensation, or the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, but lies among his people, who are called out of it, in whom he reigns by his Spirit and grace, according to laws of his own enacting; nor his personal kingdom on earth with his saints, which will last only a thousand years, and not be for ever; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory, which will be everlasting; and is called a kingdom, to denote the glory and excellency of that state; and an everlasting one, because it will never end; and the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his possession, for his people; it is prepared by him, and he will introduce them into it, when they shall be for ever with him, and reign with him for ever and ever. Some copies read, "the heavenly kingdom." There is an entrance of separate souls into this kingdom at death; and which may be said to be ministered *abundantly* to them, or *richly*, as the word signifies, when they depart out of this world with joy and comfort; triumphing over death, and the grave, in a full view by faith of their interest in the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the glories of another world; and there is an entrance into it at judgment, and which will be abundantly, when all the saints, together, in their souls and bodies, shall be introduced by Christ into the full joy of their Lord. As the saints enter the kingdom through many tribulations, the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, and they are scarcely saved, and many of

them, so as only by fire; but when the abundant grace given unto them by the way to heaven, the great consolation many enjoy in their last moments, and especially the free and full admission of them, both at death and at judgment, to eternal happiness, are considered, the entrance ministered may be said to be abundantly; or, as the Arabic version renders it, "with a breadth;" the entrance is large and broad.

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth.

Wherefore I will not be negligent] The apostle having made use of proper arguments to excite the saints he writes to, to regard the exhortation he had given to the diligent exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, proceeds to give the reasons of his own conduct, why he gave such an exhortation to them, and pressed it, and continued to do so, and determined for the future to go on with it, as particularly the usefulness and profitableness of it; and therefore, seeing it would be attended with so many advantages before mentioned, he was resolved, that he would not be careless, nor omit any opportunity that should offer.

To put you always in remembrance of these things] Of the exercise of the above graces, and the performance of the above duties, which saints are too apt to forget, and therefore should be reminded of; and it is the duty and business of the ministers of the word, frequently to inculcate those things.

Though ye know them, and be established in the present truth] For those that know the most, know but in part, and may have their knowledge increased; and those that are the most established in the truths of the Gospel, may be confirmed yet more and more. This the apostle mentions as an apology for himself, and to prevent an objection that might be made, as if he had suggested that they were ignorant and unstable; or which might insinuate, that there was no necessity of such frequent putting in remembrance; since they were both knowing and stable: by *the present truth* may be meant, either the whole scheme of the Gospel, which was now come by Christ, in opposition to the exhibition of it under the former dispensation, by promise and type; and it being so called, shews, that it is always now, and new; that there will be no alteration in it, nor addition to it, it being like the author of it, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will not give place to another scheme of things; or else

the particular truth of the coming of Christ, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, or to judge the world in righteousness, and introduce his own people into the new heavens, and new earth, chap. iii. 1—4. also 10—13.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

Yea, I think it meet] Or *just*. This is the apostle's other reason for his conduct, taken from the duty of his place and office; judging it to be what became him, as an apostle, and elder, and the minister of the circumcision, and was what was due to God and Christ, whom he served, and the souls of men, under his care.

As long as I am in this tabernacle] Or *body*, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and so some copies; for the body is as a tabernacle for the soul to dwell in, pitched for a time, and ere long to be taken down; see the note on 2 Cor. v. 1.

To stir you up] To the lively exercise of grace, and constant performance of duty.

By putting you in remembrance] Of the said things; for saints are apt to be forgetful of their duty, and backward to it, and sluggish and slothful in it.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle] Which is another reason why the apostle was so pressing in this case, and so much urged the exhortation, and was so diligent in reminding the saints of it, and stirring them up to observe it, because he knew he had but a little time to live, and which therefore he was willing to improve for their good. He sets forth his death in a very easy and familiar way, it being not at all terrible and distressing to him; it was but like the putting off of a garment, or unpinning of a tabernacle, or a removing from a tent to a palace. Saints are pilgrims here, they dwell in tents or tabernacles; at death they remove to their own country, and Father's house. Death is not a destruction of man, an annihilation of him, neither of his soul nor body: the soul is not mortal, it dies not with the body; it only removes from this world to another, from a cottage to a kingdom; and the body, though it dies, it is not reduced to nothing, it is only like a tabernacle put off, or taken down, which will be put together again in better order than now it is.

Even

Even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me] By some special revelation lately made to him; or by some strong impulse upon his mind; just as the apostle Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand, 2 Tim. iv. 7. or this may have respect to the words of Christ to Peter, above thirty years before, in John xxi. 18. which both signified what kind of death he should die, and when it should be; namely, when he was old, as now he was.

15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Moreover I will endeavour] He signifies, that he should not only use all diligence to stir them up to, and put them in remembrance of the necessary duties of their calling whilst he was alive, but should make it his study to concert some measures, and take some steps,

That ye may be able after my decease] Or Exodus, meaning his going out of this world by death, in allusion to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and marching for Canaan's land; this world being like Egypt, a place of wickedness, misery, and bondage; as heaven, like Canaan, a place and state of rest and happiness.

To have these things always in remembrance] By which they might be always put in mind of them, or by recurring to which they might have their memories refreshed; and what he means is, to leave these exhortations and admonitions in writing, which they might read, and be of use to them when he was dead and gone; and indeed by this, and his former epistle, though being dead, he yet speaketh.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables] Such as Jewish fables, cautioned against, Titus i. 14. which their traditionary and oral law, their Talmud, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the sumptuous feasts, and carnal pleasures, and entertainments of that state, with many other things; some of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or Gentile fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endless genealogies in 1 Tim. i. 4. and especially reference may be had to the metamorphosis of their

gods, and their fables relating to them, devised by Ovid, and others, since the apostle is about to speak of the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of Christ; and also other fables, with which their poets and histories abound; and likewise the prophecies of the sybils, and the oracles at Delphos, and elsewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of Simon Magus concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the several *Æones*; or the more artful composures of the false teachers, set off with all the cunning, sophistry, wit, and eloquence they were masters of. Now in order to set forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the apostle taught, especially that part of it which respected the coming of Christ; and to shew that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he observes, that he and his fellow apostles did not proceed in their account of it, on such a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and also on a word of prophecy surer than that.

When we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ] Not his first coming, though that, and the benefits arising from it, were the subject of their ministry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Christ itself, which was owing to the power of the highest; and was seen in his doctrine and ministry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God his Father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finished; in doing which he made an end of sin, and saved his people from it, redeemed them from the curse of the law, overcame the world, destroyed Satan, and abolished death; and especially in his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power: But notwithstanding his first coming was in great humility, in much meanness and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompassed with infirmities, and at last was crucified through weakness. This therefore was to be understood of an after coming of his, which the apostle had wrote of, and made known in his former epistle, chapters i. 7, 13. and iv. 5. and which he puts them in mind of in this, chap. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13. nor is the word *επαγνῶσκει*, used of any other coming of Christ, and this will be with power; and it designs his more near coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and persecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; see Matt. xxiv. 3, 30. Mark ix. 1. or more remote, namely, at the last day, when there will be a great display of power in raising the

the dead, gathering all nations before him, separating them one from another, passing the final sentence on each, and executing the same in the utter destruction of the wicked, and the compleat glorification of the saints.

But were eye-witnesses of his majesty] Meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their understanding, while others only considered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a display of his glory and majesty, of all which the apostles were eye-witnesses; but of that glory and greatness which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the sun; and such a glory on his whole body, that it darted through his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as snow, and so as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time also Moses and Elias appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof, that notwithstanding his meanness in his incarnate state, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a confirmation of it to the apostles, and might be to others; see *Matt. xvi. 27, 28.* and chap. *xvii. 1.* *Mark viii. 38.* and chap. *ix. 1.* *Luke ix. 26—28.*

17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

For he received from God the Father honour and glory] Not as an inferior from a superior, for he was equal in glory with the Father, and was, and is the brightness of his Father's glory; nor essentially, having the same glory as his Father, and to which nothing can be added; but declaratively, God the Father testifying of his glory, declaring the honour that belonged to him, as the Son of God, at the same time that an external glory was put on him, and received by him, as the son of man.

When there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory] From the bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus, Moses, and Elias, and was a symbol of the glory and presence of God, as the cloud in the tabernacle and temple were, *Exodus xl. 35, 36.* *1 Kings viii. 10, 11.* or from heaven, the habitation of the holiness and glory of God, and where he displays the glory of his being and

perfections; or from himself, who is the God and Father of glory, and is glorious in himself, in all his attributes and works. So *נברא* glory, with the Cabalistic Jews, signifies the *Shekinah*, or divine presence (*d*). And this voice was not that at his baptism; for though that was from heaven, and from God the Father, and expressed the same words as here; yet it was not on a mount, nor from a cloud, nor was it heard by the apostles, who, as yet, were not with Christ, nor called by him; nor that of which mention is made in *John xii. 28.* for though that also was from God the Father, and from heaven, and which declaratively gave honour and glory to Christ, yet did not express the words here mentioned; but that voice which came from the cloud, when Christ was transfigured on the mount, and which was heard by his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, when the following words were articulately pronounced,

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased] See the note on *Matt. xvii. 5.* The Vulgate Latin version adds here, as there, "hear ye him."

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard] Peter, who wrote this epistle, and James and John, the favourite disciples of Christ; and who were a sufficient number to bear witness of what they then saw and heard.

When we were with him] And saw his glory, and the glory of Moses and Elias, and were so delighted with his company, and theirs, and with communion with him, that Peter, in the name of the rest, desired to stay there.

In the holy mount] The Ethiopic version reads, "in the mountain of his sanctuary;" and so Grotius understands it of mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, called the holy hill, and the holy hill of Zion; and supposes that this voice was heard in the temple, and that it refers to *John xii. 28.* but without any foundation; for the mount on which Christ was transfigured is here meant; and which was either, as is generally said, *Tabor*, a mountain in Galilee; or it may be *Lebanon*, which was near *Cæsarea Philippi*, in the parts of which Christ then was: and it is called *holy*, from his presence or transfiguration on it, who is the holy one; just as the land on which Moses was; and the city and temple of Jerusalem, and mount Sion, and Sinai, are called *holy*, from the presence of the holy God there,

Exod.

(*d*) Guido. Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 92. Vid. lex. Cabalistic. p. 464. & Sopher Jetsirah, p. 1, 4.

Exod. iii. 5. Matt. iv. 5. Psalm ii. 6. and Psalm lxviii. 17. Now such a declaration of the honour and glory of Christ, as the Son of God, being made by God the Father in a voice from heaven, which the apostles heard with their ears, at the same time that they saw with their eyes, his human body glorified in an amazing manner, was to them a confirming evidence that he would come again in power and glory; and upon this evidence, they declared, and made known to the saints, the power and coming of Christ; though not on this evidence only, but also upon the more sure word of prophecy, which entirely agrees with it.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy] Tho' this word of prophecy is generally understood of the writings and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ, yet different ways are taken to fix the comparison: some think the sense is, that they are more sure than the cunningly devised fables, *1. 16.* but as these have no certainty nor authority in them, but are entirely to be rejected, the apostle would never put the sacred writings in comparison with them: and it is most clear, that the comparison lies between this word of prophecy, and the testimony of the apostles, who were eye and ear-witnesses of the majesty and glory of Christ; but how prophecy should be a surer evidence of Christ and the Gospel, than such a testimony, is difficult to understand; and is a sense which all agree to reject, by different methods: some think, that a comparative is used for a positive, and that the meaning is, that besides the testimony of the apostles, prophecy is a very sure evidence; and this is countenanced by the Syriac version, which renders it, "and we have also a firm, or true word of prophecy;" to which the Arabic agrees, "and we have a word of prophecy very true:" others choose to retain the comparison, and which indeed ought not to be thrown out; but these are divided about it; some are of opinion, that it is to be understood of the Jews to whom the apostle writes, and he himself was one, and the sense to be this; not that prophecy in itself was surer than an apostolical testimony, but that it was surer to the Jews, and more valid with them, who had been trained up in, and long used to the prophetic writings; and who had a greater esteem for the prophets of the Old Testament, than for the apostle of the New; but it is scarcely

credible that the apostle, who had been an eye and ear-witness in the holy mount, would put himself in among them, and say, *we have*, &c. for whatever prophecy was to them, it could not be surer to him than what he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears. Others suppose that the meaning is, that prophecy was *now* surer to the christians, than it was *before*, it being confirmed and established by facts and events, and also by miracles, and even by the attestation of this voice heard on the mount, and by the majesty of Christ seen there; but if this had been the sense of the apostle, he would have used these words, *now and before*; and besides, this puts the comparison quite out of its place, which manifestly stands between former prophecy, and the present testimony of the apostles: but the truth of the matter is, that this word of prophecy is not to be understood of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; for though these are the word of God, and do testify of Christ, and are to be taken heed, and attended to, as proofs and evidence of Gospel-truths, and are a light to direct and guide in matters both of faith and practice, yet they are not the only light, and are far from being the clearest, and what are only to be attended to; for the Gospel that came by Christ, and is preached by his apostles, and is contained in the writings of the New Testament, is a much clearer light, and at least equally to be attended to: nor are the prophecies of the Old Testament, which particularly relate to Christ, designed; there are many of this kind, which put together, may very well be called the word of prophecy, and which were to the Jews a light in a dark place, until Christ came in the flesh; and though they are to be attended to, and compared with facts, to shew the truth of the divine revelation, yet they are not a surer evidence, nor so sure an evidence, as the evangelical testimony is, which is of facts, and these supported by miracles; for now the day-spring from on high hath visited us, and Christ, the bright and morning-star has appeared: but the word of prophecy, concerning Christ's second coming, is here intended, whether it lies in the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, as in *Psalm xcvi. 13. Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13.* or in the words of Christ, *Matt. xvi. 27, 28. and chap. xxiv. 3, 30, 44.* which latter is most likely. The Ethiopic version understands this of some particular prophecy, and as if the words were a citation of some prophet, rendering the words thus, "and we have a voice more ancient than this, of a prophet, saying, Ye do well who take heed," &c. Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion, that the apostle refers to the book of the Revelation of St John, which would not be unlikely, could it be proved that it was then written.

Now

Now this prophecy, or prediction, concerning Christ's coming again with power and great glory, was a surer evidence of it, than what the apostles saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears upon the mount; nothing was surer to them, nor could any thing make it surer to them, that he was honoured and glorified, than what they saw and heard; but then this did not so certainly prove, that he would hereafter be glorified, or come again in glory. What they saw and heard was a presumptive proof that it *might* be so, and was a confirming pledge and evidence to them that so it *would* be, and was a glorious representation of it; but Christ's prophecy or prediction, that so it *should* be, more strongly ascertained it, since he said it, to whom all things were known from the beginning, and whose counsel shall stand, and not one word of his shall ever fail.

Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. The prophecy concerning Christ's second coming, is as a light; it is a revelation of that which was in the dark, lay hid as a secret and mystery in the heart of God; and which could not be known by men, had it not been foretold by God; and it is made, as prophecy in all other cases is, by throwing light, as to this affair, into the mind of him, or them to whom it is revealed; and is a light to them to whom it is delivered, and which they should attend unto, as to a lamp or torch, to guide and direct them; though in some sense it is but a feeble one, and is as a light, *that shineth in a dark place*; meaning not the world, which is a place of darkness, ignorance, and error; nor merely the state of the saints in general in this life, who at most, and best, see but through a glass darkly; but has a particular respect to the darkness which attends the saints, concerning the second coming of Christ, and which will especially attend them a little before that time. Prophecy holds out clearly, that Christ will come again; that he will come in great glory, in his Father's, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels, and with great power, to raise the dead, and judge mankind; and though it gives hints, that upon this, the saints shall be with Christ in the air, on earth, and in heaven; and that there will be new heavens, and a new earth; and that the saints shall reign here with Christ a thousand years, after which the Gog and Magog army will attack them without success; yet these are not so clear, as for saints to be agreed in the sense of them; and much more are they in the dark about the time of his coming. Now prophecy is the surest evidence, and best light the saints have concerning this

matter, *until the day dawn*; not the Gospel-day, so much spoken of by the prophets, that had dawned already; rather a more clear knowledge of Christ, and Gospel-truths, which will be in the spiritual kingdom and reign of Christ hereafter; or else the latter-day-glory, at the personal coming of Christ, when the light of the moon shall be as that of the sun, and that of the sun shall be seven fold as the light of seven days; yea, when there will be no need of sun or moon, but Christ shall be come, and be the light of his people; see *Isaiah xxx. 26.* and chap. *lx. 1, 2.* *Rev. xxi. 23, 24.* after which will follow the everlasting day of glory, when all darkness will be gone, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known: *and the day-star arise in your hearts*; or "the sun," as the Syriac version renders it; not Christ, the morning-star, the day-spring from on high, and the Sun of righteousness, who was already risen upon them; nor the grace of God implanted in their hearts, by which they were already called out of darkness, and made light in the Lord; but as the day-star is the bringer of light, as the word used signifies, or the forerunner of the day, so it here intends the immediate signs and forerunners of the coming of Christ; which when observed in their hearts, and by their understandings, as being come to pass, they may lift up their heads with joy, because their redemption draws near, *Luke xxi. 28.* and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "and redemption arise for you in your hearts." Now till this time, the sure word of prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is to be *taken heed unto*, as a lamp, light and torch, to direct us to it, to encourage us to love it, long for it, and hasten to it: and in so doing we shall *do well*; it will be well for the glory of God and Christ, this being setting our seals to them as true; and well for ourselves, to keep up our faith, hope, and expectation of it unmoved.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Knowing this first] Especially, and in the first place, this is to be known, observed, and considered.

That no prophecy of the scripture] That is contained in scripture, be it what it will,

Is of any private interpretation] Not that this is levelled against the right of private judgment of scripture; or to be understood, as if a private believer had not a right of reading, searching, examining and judging, and interpreting the scriptures himself, by virtue of the unction which teacheth all things, and who, as a spiritual man, judgeth

judgeth all things; otherwise, why are such commended as doing well, by taking heed to prophecy, in the preceding verse, and this given as a reason to encourage them to it? the words may be rendered, "of one's own interpretation;" that is, such as a natural man forms of himself, by the mere force of natural parts and wisdom, without the assistance of the Spirit of God; and which is done without comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and which is not agreeable to the scripture, to the analogy of faith, and mind of Christ; though rather this phrase should be rendered, "no prophecy of the scripture is of a man's own impulse, invention, or composition;" is not human, but purely divine: and this sense carries in it a reason, why the sure word of prophecy, concerning the second coming of Christ, should be taken heed to, and made use of as a light, till he does come; because as no scripture-prophecy, so not that, is a contrivance of man's, his own project and device, and, what his own spirit prompts and impels him to, but what is made by the dictates and impulse of the Spirit of God; for whatever may be said of human predictions, or the false prophecies of lying men, who deliver them out, how and when they please, nothing of this kind can be said of any scripture prophecy, nor of this concerning the second coming of Christ; and this sense the following words require.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost.

For the prophecy] The whole scripture, all the prophetic writings; so the Jews call the scriptures תנ"ך "the prophecy (g)," by way of eminence, and from the subject-matter of the sacred word.

Came not in old time by the will of man] Was not brought into the world at first, or in any period of time, as and when man would, according to his pleasure, and as he thought fit: neither Moses, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Ezekiel, nor Daniel, nor any other of the prophets, prophesied when they pleased, but when it was the will of God they should; they were stirred up to prophecy, not by any human impulse, but by a divine influence: with this agrees what R. Sangari says (b), "That the speech of the prophets, when the holy Spirit clothed them in all their words, was directed by a divine influence, and the prophet could not speak in the choice of his own words," or according to his will.

But holy men of God] Such as he sanctified by his Spirit, and separated from the rest of men to such peculiar service; and whom he employed as public ministers of his word: for so this phrase *men, or man of God* often signifies, 1 Sam. ii. 27. 2 Tim. iii. 17.

Spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost] Who illuminated their minds, gave them a knowledge of divine things, and a foresight of future ones; dictated to them, what they should say or write; and moved upon them strongly, and by a secret and powerful impulse, stirred them up to deliver what they did in the name and fear of God: which shews the authority of the Scriptures, that they are the word of God, and not of men; and as such should be attended to, and received with all affection and reverence; and that the Spirit is the best interpreter of them, who first dictated them; and that they are to be the rule of our faith and practice; nor are we to expect any other until the second coming of Christ.

CHAP. II.

This chapter contains a description of false teachers, that were then in Christian churches, as there had been false prophets among the Jews; and they are described by the doctrines, which they privily introduced; in general, damnable heresies; in particular, denying the Lord that brought them; and by their success, having many followers of them in their pernicious ways; and by the sad effects following hereupon; with respect to the way of truth, that was blasphemed; with respect to their hearers, they, through the covetousness of these false teachers, were made merchandize of; and with respect to themselves, swift and sure destruction would be brought upon them, *ψ*. 1, 2, 3. which is illustrated and confirmed by the instances of punishment in the angels, the men of the old world, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, *ψ*. 4—8. and whereas, in these instances, notice is taken of the deliverance of some righteous persons, as Noah and Lot, when wicked men were destroyed; the apostle draws this conclusion from the whole, that the Lord knows both how to deliver the saints out of afflictions, and to reserve wicked men until the day of judgment, then to be punished, *ψ*. 9. especially such shall be then punished, who are described by their impure course of life, their contempt of civil government, and their presumption and self-will, *ψ*. 10. which sins of theirs are aggravated by the different conduct of angels, superior to them; and by their being like brute beasts, as ignorant as they, and even

Q q

below

(g) R. Ellahn in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect. Karzorom, c. 30. p. 153. (b) Cofri, par. 3. §. 20. fol. 287. a.

below them; whose punishment will be to perish in their corruption, as the just reward of their unrighteousness, since they are open in sin, take pleasure in it, and sport themselves with it, and are spots and blemishes in christian societies, *†*. 11—13. and these, who are no other than the false teachers before spoken of, are further described by their adulterous eyes, which cannot cease from sin; by their beguiling unstable souls; by the covetous practices their hearts were exercised with; by their just desert, cursed children; by the course they steer, forsaking the right way, going astray from it, and following the way of Balaam in his covetousness, and other wicked practices, for which he was reproved by his ass; and by various metaphors, which express the emptiness of these persons, and which also point at their destruction, and describe their boasts and brags, and the influence they have, through their lasciviousness and uncleanness, on some persons, who have been outwardly reformed, *†*. 14—18. and this they obtain over them in a very stupid and senseless way, by promising them liberty, when through being overcome by them, and drawn into sin, they were brought into bondage, and become servants of corruption; and so their case is worse than it was before their reformation, and profession of religion; and better it would have been, not to have had the knowledge they had, than after it to turn from the paths of truth and holiness; which is illustrated by a true scripture proverb, which expresses the filthy nature of sin, the character of these men, and their irrecoverable state and condition, *†*. 19—22.

BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

But there were false prophets also among the people
As well as holy men of God, who gave out prophecies by the inspiration and impulse of the holy Spirit; that is, among the people of the Jews, God's professing people, whose God was the Lord, and who had chosen them to be a special and peculiar people, above all people of the earth; and had distinguished them by his favours from all others: among these, though the Syriac version reads *in the world*, there were false prophets, who ran, and were not sent; and who prophesied, and the Lord spake not to them: of these there

were many in Jeremiah's time, and in the times of Ezekiel; and in Ahab's time, besides the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, slain by Elijah, there were four hundred that called themselves the prophets of the Lord; among whom went forth a lying spirit, encouraging Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead, promising him prosperity and success; Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, with whom Micajah, the true prophet, had much contention, was at the head of them; and such there were among that people in all ages, until the times of Christ, and in his likewise; see *Matt.* vii. 15. now from these, by an easy transition, the apostle proceeds to another part of his design in this epistle, to describe the characters of false teachers under the present dispensation, that saints may beware, and avoid their pernicious principles and practices.

Even as there shall be false teachers among you
Which need not to be wondered at, or stumble any, it being no new or strange thing, but what was always more or less the case of the people of God. This is a prophecy of what should be, and agrees with the prediction of our Lord, *Matt.* xxiv. 11, 24. and which regards not only the times immediately following, in which it had a remarkable fulfilment, for false teachers now began to arise, and appeared in great numbers in the age succeeding the apostles, but to all periods of time from hence, to the second coming of Christ; and these were to spring from, and be among such that bore the christian name, and so regards not Mahometans and Deists; and it is to be observed, that the phrase is varied in this clause, and these are called not *prophets* but *teachers*; because as prophecy was more peculiar to the former dispensation, so is teaching to the present.

Who privily shall bring in damnable heresies
Errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; such as relate to a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; and to the person of Christ, to his proper Deity, distinct personality, eternal Sonship, and real humanity; and to his office, as mediator, rejecting him as the true Messiah, and as the only Saviour of sinners; denying his sacrifice and satisfaction, and the imputation of his righteousness; and to the holy Spirit, his Deity, personality, and divine influences and operations: these are *damnable*, or *destructive*, or "heresies of destruction;" which lead to eternal destruction both those that introduce and propagate them, and those that embrace and profess them; for they remove, or attempt to remove, the foundation of eternal life and happiness: the manner in which these are usually introduced, is *privily*; at un-
awares,

awares, secretly, under a disguise, and gradually, by little and little, and not at once, and openly; and which is the constant character and practice of such men, who lie in wait to deceive, creep into churches at unawares, and into houses privately; and insinuate their principles under cious pretences and appearances of truth, using the hidden things of dishonesty, walking in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully, and colouring things with false glosses and feigned words: and

Even denying the Lord that bought them] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, but God the Father; for the word *κύριος* is not there used, which always is where Christ is spoken of as the Lord, but *θεός*; and which is expressive of the power which masters have over their servants ⁽¹⁾, and which God has over all mankind; and wherever this word is elsewhere used, it is spoken of God the Father, whenever applied to a divine person, as in *Luke* ii. 29. *Acts* iv. 24. *2 Tim.* ii. 21. *Rev.* vi. 10. and especially this appears to be the sense, from the parallel text in *Jude* 4, where the Lord God denied by those men, is manifestly distinguished from our Lord Jesus Christ, and by whom these persons are said to be bought: the meaning is not, that they were redeemed by the blood of Christ, for Christ is not intended; and besides, whenever redemption by Christ is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned, or some circumstance or another which fully determines the sense; see *Acts* xx. 28. *1 Cor.* vi. 20. and chapter vii. 23. *Eph.* i. 7. *1 Pet.* i. 18, 19. *Rev.* v. 9. whereas here is not the least hint of any thing of this kind: add to this, that such who are redeemed by Christ are the elect of God only, the people of Christ, his sheep, and friends, and church, and who are never left to deny him so as to perish eternally; for could such be lost, or deceive, or be deceived finally and totally by damnable heresies, and bring on themselves swift destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom price be paid for nought; but the word *bought* regards temporal mercies and deliverances, which these men enjoyed, and is used as an aggravation of their sin in denying the Lord; both by words, delivering out such tenets as are derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections, and which deny one or other of them, and of his purposes, providence, promises and truths; and by works, turning the doctrine of the grace of God into lasciviousness, being disobedient and reprobate to every good work; that they should act this part against the Lord who had made them, and upheld them in their beings, and took care

of them in his providence, and had followed them with goodness and mercy all the days of their lives; just as Moses aggravates the ingratitude of the Jews in *Deut.* xxxii. 6. from whence this phrase is borrowed, and to which it manifestly refers: *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise! Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Nor is this the only place the apostle refers to in this chapter, see *1. 12, 13.* compared with *Deut.* xxxii. 5. and it is to be observed, that the persons he writes to were Jews, who were called the people the Lord had redeemed and purchased, *Exod.* xv. 13, 16. and so were the first false teachers that rose up among them; and therefore this phrase is very applicable to them.

And bring upon themselves swift destruction] Either in this life, being suddenly cut off in the midst of their days, and by the immediate hand of God, as Arius and other heretics have been; or eternal damnation in the other, which their tenets lead unto, and which will swiftly come upon them when they are promising themselves peace and safety.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways] Their principles and their practices, which lead to destruction. The Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and six copies of Beza's, and others, read "their lasciviousnesses;" and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "their luxuries," and all the Oriental versions seem to have read in like manner. The Syriac version renders it, "their impurity;" and the Arabic version, "their unchastities;" and the Ethiopic version, "their lust;" and which seems to have respect to the impure conversation of the followers of Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, Carpocratians, and others, who indulged themselves in all unnatural lusts and uncleanness; and generally, when men make shipwreck of faith, they also do of a good conscience, and become immoral in their conversations: and yet, as destructive as their principles, and as dishonourable and scandalous as their practices be, many were, and are their followers; so it was foretold by Christ, *Matthew* xxiv. 11. and so it has been, *Rev.* xiii. 3. The road both of error and wickedness is a broad one, in which many walk; and a multitude is no proof of the truth of a church, or of the principles of men, nor to be followed.

By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken

(1) Vid. Ammonium *νῆπι σπασίας*, in voce *κυριότης*.

[*spoken of*] That is, either Christ, who is truth itself, and the true way to eternal life and happiness; or the Gospel, the word of truth, which holds forth Christ the truth, and points to him, and every other truth, and nothing but truth; or the christian religion, which is the true way, in opposition to all sects and heresies; and is what should be blasphemed and spoken against, either by these men or their followers; for the phrase may be rendered, *by whom*, as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and the meaning be, that they should, in a blasphemous way, speak and write against Christ and his truths, reproach and revile them, and in a virulent manner oppose them, and trample them under foot: or "for the sake of them," as other versions read; and as we do, "by reason of them;" they should be the occasion, by their impure lives, of the name of Christ, and his doctrines, being blasphemed by profane and irreligious men; see *Rom. ii. 24.* The Alexandrian copy, and one of Stephens's, read "the glory of truth;" and so the Ethiopic version, "the glory of his truth."

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

[*And through covetousness*] Which is generally a prevailing vice among false teachers, they having no other end in view than themselves; either to gain popular applause and vainglory, which they are always covetous of; or to amass riches to themselves, after which they have an insatiable desire.

[*Shall they with feigned words*] Made words, words of their own devising, and not which the holy Ghost teacheth; whereby they cover themselves, and privily introduce their pernicious principles; and therefore new words and phrases, are always to be suspected and guarded against, especially in articles of moment and importance: or with flattering words and fair speeches, great swelling words of vanity, having mens persons in admiration, because of worldly advantage; and in this way they gain their point.

[*Make merchandise of you*] Deal with the souls of men, as merchants do with their goods, carry them to market and sell them; so false teachers deal with the souls of their followers, draw them into their destructive principles and practices at their own expence, enrich themselves by the price of them, and sell them to Satan, and they them-

selves pay for it; see *Zech. xi. 5.* *Rev. xviii. 13.* but in the issue, and that in a short time, they will be no gainers by such practices.

[*Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not*] That is, their condemnation, which God in righteousness has determined, "from the creation of the world," as the Ethiopic version reads, or from all eternity, see *Jude 4.* to bring them into, for their vile principles and practices is not retarded and delayed; it does not linger and stay behind, or slacken its pace; it will not tarry, it will come upon them at the appointed time.

[*And their damnation slumbereth not*] An avenging God, who has appointed them to damnation for their sins, slumbers not; the justice of God is not asleep, nor careless and negligent, but is awake, and watches over them, to bring the evil upon them they have deserved, and is in reserve for them, and will hasten to perform it; the determined destruction does not lie dormant, but in a little time will be stirred up, and fall with dreadful weight on such sinners, as may be concluded from the following awful instance.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

[*For if God spared not the angels that sinned*] By whom are meant, the devil and his angels; who are spirits created by God, and as such were good; their first estate which they left was pure and holy, as well as high and honourable; they were at first in the truth, though they abode not in it; they were once among the morning stars and sons of God, and were angels of light; their numbers are many, and therefore are here expressed in the plural number, *angels*, though it cannot be said how large; a legion of them was in one man; one at first might be in the rebellion, and draw a large number with him into it, at least was at the head of it, who is called Beelzebub, the prince of devils: what their first sin was, and the occasion of it, is not easy to say; it is generally thought to be pride, affecting a likeness to, or an equality with God; since this was what man was tempted to by them, and by which he fell, as they are thought to do; and because this is the sin of such, who fall into the condemnation of the devil; *1 Tim. iii. 6.* and is the sin that goes before a fall in common; as it did before the fall of man, so it might before the fall of angels, *Prov. xvi. 18.* The passage in *Job viii. 44.* seems most clearly of any to express their sin, which

which was *not abiding in the truth*; in the truth of the Gospel, particularly the great truth of the salvation of men, by the incarnate Son of God; and which they could by no means brook, and which might spring from pride, they not bearing the thought, that the human nature should be exalted above theirs; hence the Jews, in opposing Christ as the Messiah and Saviour, is said to be of their father the devil, and to do his lusts; and Judas that betrayed him, and fell from his apostleship and the truth, is called *a devil*; and the heresies of men, respecting the person and offices of Christ, are stiled doctrines of devils; and men that have professed this truth and afterwards deny it, are represented in the same irrecoverable and desperate case with devils, and must expect the same punishment, *John viii. 44.* and chap. vi. 70. *1 Tim. iv. 1.* *Heb. vi. 6.* and chap. x. 26, 29. and also it may be observed, on the contrary, that the good angels that stand, greatly love, value, esteem, and pry into the truths of the Gospel; particularly the scheme of man's salvation, by the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ; now "these God spared not," or "had no mercy on," as the Arabic version renders it; he did not forgive their sin, nor provide a Saviour, for them; but directly, and at once, notwithstanding the dignity and excellency of their nature, in strict justice, and awful severity, without any mercy, inflicted due punishment on them; wherefore it cannot be thought that false teachers, who, as they abide not in the truth, but deny and oppose it, should escape the vengeance of God.

But cast them down to hell] They were hurled out of heaven, from whence they fell as lightning, into the lowest, or inferior places, as the Syriac version renders it; either into the air, as in *Eph. ii. 2.* or into the earth, as in *Rev. xii. 9.* or into the deep, the abyss, the bottomless pit, where they are detained as in a prison, *Luke viii. 31.* *Rev. ix. 11.* and chap. xx. 3, 7. though for certain reasons, and at certain times, are suffered to come forth, and rove about in this earth, and in the air: and these, when removed from their ancient seats in heaven, were not merely bid to go away, as the wicked will at the day of judgment; or were *drive* out, as Adam was from the garden of Eden, but *cast down*; with great power, indignation, wrath, and contempt, never to be raised and restored again.

And delivered them into chains of darkness] Leaving them under the guilt of sin, which is the power of darkness, and in black despair; shutting them up in unbelief, impenitence, and hardness of mind; being holden with the cords of

their sins, and in the most dreadful state of bondage and captivity to their lusts, in just judgment on them; and in the most miserable and uncomfortable condition, being driven from the realms of light, deprived of the face and presence of God, in the utmost horror and trembling, and fearful looking for judgment, and fiery indignation to consume them; and in utter darkness, without the least glimmering of light, joy, peace, and comfort; and where there is nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and being also under the restraints of the power and providence of God, and not able to stir or move, or do any thing without divine permission; and being likewise by the everlasting, unalterable, and inscrutable purposes and decrees of God, appointed to everlasting wrath and destruction; by which they are consigned and bound over to it, and held fast, that they cannot escape it.

To be reserved unto judgment] To the day of judgment, to the last and general judgment; the judgment of torment, as the Syriac version here calls it; the words may be rendered, "and delivered them to be kept at judgment, in chains of darkness;" when they will be in full torment, which they are not yet in; and then they will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for them, and be everlastingly shut up in the prison of hell, from whence they will never more be suffered to go out; till which time they are indeed under restraints, and are held in by Christ, who has the power of binding and loosing them at pleasure; and who then, as the judge of men and devils, will bring them forth, and pass and execute sentence on them. The Jews give an account of the dejection, fall and punishment of the angels, in a matter pretty much like this of Peter's; whom they speak of under different names; so of the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve, whom they call Samael, and because of that sin of his, they say (*k*), that the Lord "cast down Samael and his company from the place of their holiness, out of heaven;" and of Azazel, angels, who they say, sinned by lust after the daughters of men, they frequently affirm, that God cast them down from their holiness (*l*), and that, he *בָּרַחֵם מִן הַקִּיּוּן*, "cast them down below in chains (*m*);" and that God cast them down from their holiness from above; and when they descended, they were rolled in the air—and he brought them to the mountains of darkness, which are called the mountains of the east, and bound them in chains of iron, and the chains.

(*k*) *Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.*
in *Gen. fol. 35. 3.*

(*l*) *Zohar*

(*m*) *Ibid fol. 32. 3.*

chains were sunk into the midst of the great deep (n): and elsewhere they say (o), that God cast them down from their holy degree, out of heaven—from their holy place out of heaven—and bound them in chains of iron, in the mountains of darkness.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

And spared not the old world] In distinction from the present world, that now is; which was as it were, formed anew out of that, which was destroyed by the deluge. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the original world;” and the Ethiopic version, the “first world;” it designs the ancient inhabitants of the world, as it was from the beginning, before the flood; who being wicked, were not spared by God, but had just punishment inflicted on them.

But saved Noah the eighth person] Not the eighth from Adam, as Enoch is said to be the seventh from him, Jude 14. for he was the tenth; nor is it to be read with the following clause, “the eighth preacher of righteousness;” but he was the eighth person, or one of the eight persons, saved from the flood; see 1 Pet. iii. 20. hence the Ethiopic version; rather as a paraphrase than a version, renders it, “but caused to remain seven souls with Noah, whom he saved;” Hottinger (p), and Dr Hammond (q) observe, from the Arabic writers, that the mountain on which the ark rested, and a town near it, were called Themanim; that is, the eight; from the number of persons then and there saved.

A preacher of righteousness] Of the righteousness of God, in all his ways and works, and in case he should destroy the world by a flood, as he had threatened; and of civil and moral righteousness among men, both by words, during the building of the ark, and by works, by his own example in his righteous life and conversation; and of the righteousness of faith, or of Christ, by which he was justified, and of which he was an heir, Heb. xi. 7. the Jews (r) say, that Noah was a prophet; and they represent him also as a preacher, and even tell us the very words he used in his exhortations to the old world (s), saying, “Be ye turned from your evil ways and works,

“left the waters of the flood come upon you, “and cut off all the seed of the children of “men:” but though Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was saved, false teachers cannot expect to escape divine vengeance; who only are transformed as ministers of righteousness, but in truth are ministers of unrighteousness; opposers of the righteousness of Christ, and live unrighteous lives and conversations, and so their end will be according to their works.

Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly] Or “the ungodly of the world,” as רשעי ארצו, “the ungodly of the earth (t);” see Psalm lxxv. 8. though here it indeed means a whole world of wicked men, all but a very few, which were destroyed by the flood. This expresses both the wickedness of the men of that generation, the imagination of the thoughts of whose heart, were evil continually; and whose lives were filled up with uncleanness, violence, rapine, oppression, injustice, and corruption, of all sorts; and likewise the large numbers of them, there was a whole world of them; and yet this did not secure them from the wrath of God, but served to stir it up the more; wherefore false teachers and their followers, must not build upon their numbers, or hope to be screened from just punishment on that account; since a world of ungodly men, were, for their wickedness, at once swept away, with a flood of God’s bringing upon them; causing that very useful and serviceable element of water, to be the means of their destruction; for this was not a casual thing, which came of itself, or by chance, but was of God himself, who broke up the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and destroyed at once, all mankind, men, women, and children, and every living creature, excepting what were with Noah in the ark: and since they were persons of such a character as here described, it is not to be thought their punishment is ended here; it is the general notion of the Jews (u), that “the generation of the flood, shall have no part in “the world to come, nor shall they stand in judgment.”

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

And

(n) Midrash Ruthan Zohar in Gen. fol. 45. 2. & c. fol. 77. 3.
(o) Zohar in Numb. fol. 84. 1. vid. Targor Hamor, fol. 6. 4.
& 9. 4. & Razi, fol. 14. 2. & 18. 2. (p) Smegana
Orientale, p. 251, 252. (q) In loc. (r) Aben
Ezra in Gen. viii. 21. (s) Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

(t) Targum in Psal. xli. 8. (u) Misna Sanheerin, c. ix.
§. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 4. fol. 149. 1. Yalkut Simoni,
par 2, fol. 89. 2.

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes] By raining brimstone and fire upon them, from heaven, *Gen.* xix. 24. which soon reduced them to ashes, with Admah and Zeboim, *Deut.* xxix. 25. cities delightfully situated, which were as the garden of God, and the land of Egypt, together with the inhabitants of them; and after they had received a signal mercy, in being rescued by Abraham from the kings who had carried them captive; and though Abraham, the friend of God, interceded for them; and righteous Lot dwelt among them. The first of these cities, is in the Hebrew language called Sodom: Philo the Jew (*w*) calls it Sodoma, as in *Roman.* ix. 29. and in the Septuagint on *Gen.* xiii. 10. and chapters xviii. 22. and xix. 1. and *Isaiah* i. 9. here it is said to be a city, and Josephus (*x*) always calls it the city of the Sodomites, but in *Matt.* x. 15. and chap. xi. 24. we read of the land of Sodom; and so Philo (*y*) the Jew speaks of *χώρα*, the region or country of the Sodomites; here the word is of the plural number, as in *Matt.* x. 15. and xi. 23, 24. *Luke* xvii. 29. as it is also in the Septuagint in *Gen.* x. 19. and chapters xiii. 13. and xiv. 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 21, 22. and in Philo the Jew (*z*), and so is Gomorrah in some copies of this place, as in *Matt.* x. 15. Solinus the historian, gives an account of these cities, in agreement with this; "A good way off of Jerusalem, he says (*a*), "is opened a sorrowful gulph, which the "black ground, in cinerum soluta, "reduced to "ashes," shews it to be touched by heaven; "there were two towns, or cities, the one called "Sodom, and the other Gomorrah; where an "apple is produced, which although it has an "appearance of ripeness, cannot be eat; for the "outward skin that encompasses it, only contains a sort of soot, or embers within, which, "ever so lightly squeezed, evaporates into smoke "and dust;" and so the author of the book of *Wisdom*, chapter x. 7. speaking of the five cities, on which fire fell, says, "of whose wickedness, "even to this day, the waste land that smoketh "is a testimony; and plants bearing fruit, that "never come to ripeness." Philo the Jew (*b*) says, that "there are shewed to this day in Syria, "monuments of this unspeakable destruction, that "happened; as ruins, ashes, sulphur, smoke, "and a weak flame, breaking forth as of a fire "burning."

Condemned them with an overthrow] By this

sad catastrophe, God condemned the sins of those men of Sodom and Gomorrah, and adjudged their persons to everlasting damnation; of which their temporal punishment, was an emblem and figure; see *Jude* 7. the word *overthrow*, is generally used, when this destruction is spoken of, *Deut.* xxix. 23. *Isaiah* xlii. 19. *Jer.* i. 40. *Amos* iv. 11. and therefore retained by the apostle here.

Making them ensamples unto those, who after should live ungodly] In the commission of any sins, and be open, bold, and impudent in them, and declare them as they did; and especially that should live in the commission of the same sins, those unnatural lusts and uncleannesses, which to this day go by the name of *sodomy*, and *sodomitical* practices; now the punishment of the inhabitants of these cities was an ensample to such wicked livers, shewing what they must expect, and was a representation of those everlasting burnings, which such sinners, as a righteous retaliation for their burning lusts, shall be cast into. The Jews say (*c*) the same of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah as of the old world; "the men of Sodom "have no part in the world to come, as is said "Gen. xiii. 13. but the men of Sodom were wicked, "and sinners before the Lord exceedingly; wicked in "this world, and sinners in the world to come;" see the note on *Jude* 7.

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

And delivered just Lot] Who was a just man, being justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and having the new man formed in him, which is created in righteousness and true holiness; and living soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without sin; for there is not a just man that lives and sinneth not; this righteous man was delivered from the burning of Sodom by the means of angels, *Gen.* xix. 16, 17. The Jews are very injurious to this good man's character, and give a very different one of him from this of the apostle's; they call him a wicked man, a perfect wicked man, as wicked as the inhabitants of Sodom (*d*); and say, that because they abounded in sin, therefore Lot chose to dwell among them (*e*); and affirm (*f*), that all the time he was with Abraham, God did not join himself to him, and did not commune with Abraham on his account; but when he was separated from him did; they call him the evil imagination, and the old serpent that was accursed, and cursed Lot

(w) De Temulentia, p. 272.

(x) Antiq. l. 1. c. 8. §. 3.

(y) De Temulentia, p. 272.

(z) De Temulentia, p. 272.

(a) Polyhistor, c. 48.

(b) De

De Temulentia, l. 2. p. 862.

(c) Misa. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 4. fol. 143. 1.

(d) Targum Hammon, fol. 13. 2. & 16. 4. & 20. 1.

(e) Jerchi in Gen. xiii. 20.

(f) Zohar in Gen. fol. 37. 2.

Jerchi in Gen. xiii. 23.

Lot (g); but Philo the Jew (b) speaks better of him, and says, that he did not embrace and delight in the iniquities of the inhabitants, though he did not arrive to the perfection of wisdom; and the author of the book of *Wisdom*, chapter x. 6. calls him the *righteous man*, as the apostle does here; and very truly, since it follows,

Vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked] The inhabitants of Sodom, who had no regard to the laws of God or man, or to the law and light of nature; but as worse than brute beasts, lived daily in the commission of unnatural lusts; and therefore their conversation is rightly said to be filthy, and was a grievous burden to righteous Lot; for to a good man, not only his own sins, but the sins of others, whether professors or profane, are a burden, and make him groan under them, being grievously fatigued with them, as this good man was, and weary of life because of them, as Rebekah was, through the daughters of Heth.

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

(For that righteous man dwelling among them) Which is sometimes the lot of good men, to their great sorrow and grief, *Psalms* cxx. 5—7. *Isa.* vi. 5. Upon mentioning those words in *Genesis* xiii. 12, 13. and pitched his tent towards Sodom, but the men of Sodom were wicked, &c. says R. Eleazar (i); "he is a righteous man that dwells between two wicked men, and does not learn their works;" and such an one was Lot, whatever they are elsewhere pleased to say of him.

In seeing and hearing] The Vulgate Latin version reads this in connection with the word *righteous*, thus, "in seeing and hearing he was righteous:" he could not bear to see their filthy actions, and hear their obscene language, but turned away from them, and shut his eyes, and stopped his ears, by which he appears to be a righteous and good man; though rather this belongs to what follows, seeing their wicked practices, and hearing their filthy talk.

Vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds] Either they vexed him, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; or rather he vexed himself; he fretted and teased himself, and became exceeding uneasy, and was put

upon a rack and torture, as the word signifies continually with their wicked actions; see *Psalms* cxix. 158.

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly] That "fear him," as the Syriac version renders it; or that "rightly worship," as the Arabic; such as Noah and Lot, men that know God in Christ spiritually and experimentally; that believe in him, love him, fear him, worship him in spirit and truth, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. This verse is a conclusion from the preceding instances and examples, respecting both the mercy and justice of God; the mercy of God in delivering the godly and righteous,

Out of temptations] By which are meant, not the temptations of Satan to sin, distrust, and despondency, though the Lord knows how, and is both able and willing to, and does deliver them from them; but afflictions and tribulations, such as Noah and Lot were exposed to; and which are so called, because they try the graces, particularly the faith and patience of the godly; and to deliver from these is the Lord's work: he grants his presence in them; he supports under them; he sanctifies them to them, and in his own time delivers out of them; for he knows how, and by what means, and when to do it, and is both able and willing: he has determined to do it, for the nature, measure, and duration of afflictions are fixed by him, and in his providence he does do it, as the instances before given prove.

And to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished] This is that part of the conclusion from the above premises, respecting the justice of God; and by the *unjust* are designed, persons without a righteousness, and that are full of all unrighteousness, and take pleasure in it, and live unrighteous lives, committing acts of injustice, both with respect to God and men; and the Lord that has reserved the fallen angels in chains of darkness unto judgment, knows how to reserve "in prison," as the Arabic version renders it, the souls of those in hell, and their bodies in the grave "unto the day of judgment;" of the last and general judgment, when Christ shall judge both quick and dead, and bring every secret thing to light, which that day shall declare, God has appointed to judge the world in; in order to be punished in soul and body, with everlasting and compleat destruction, which, as yet, is not.

This

(g) Zohar in Gen. fol. 56. r. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 14. 3. & 20. 2. Bereshit Rabba, 5. 44. fol. 19. 1.
(b) De vita Moisi, l. 2. p. 662. (i) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

This phrase, *the day of judgment*, is used in *Judith* xvi. 17, and is a Jewish one.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

But chiefly them that walk after the flesh] Not merely after the dictates of corrupt nature, as all men, and even God's elect do, in a state of unregeneracy; but *after strange flesh*, as *Jude* expresses it, after the flesh of men.

In the lust of uncleanness] Not of fornication and adultery, but of sodomy, and sodomitical practices; sins exceeding great, not only contrary to the law and light of nature, but dishonourable to human nature; and are what prevail where idolatry, infidelity, errors, and heresies do; and which, as they are sins of the deepest dye, deserve the greater damnation, and are chiefly, and more especially punished by God with great severity.

And despise government] Of parents, to whom these proud boasters and blasphemers are generally disobedient; and of masters, pretending it to be contrary to their christian liberty; and of magistrates on the same account, and as being a restraint upon their lusts; which is to despise the ordinances of God, his representatives, and to introduce anarchy and confusion, and to open a door to all manner of sin; and also the government of Christ, as head of the church, and king of Zion, whom they will not have to reign over them, and therefore reject his laws, and submit not to his ordinances; and likewise the government of the world itself by God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "despise their creator:" denying his omniscience and his providence, giving out, that he neither sees, observes, and takes notice of what is done in the world; nor does he himself do either good or evil; or concern himself about what is done by men.

Presumptuous are they] Bold and daring, not fearing to speak against men of the most exalted character on earth, and against God himself in heaven; see *Psalms* lxxiii. 8, 9.

Selfwilled] Pleased with themselves, and their own conceits, their dogmas and opinions, with their high sense, and profound judgment; and being obstinate in their sentiments, and resolutely bent to retain and defend them.

They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities] Or glories; of the apostles, who were set in the first

place in the church, and were the glory of Christ, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. 2 *Cor.* viii. 23, of angels, styled thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; or rather of civil magistrates, set in high places, and to whom glory and honour are due; which to do is contrary to the law of God, and of dangerous consequence, *Exodus* xxii. 28. *Ecc.* x. 20.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might] Which is not to be understood of evil angels, or devils; for besides, that they are greatly weakened and impaired by their fall, they are the accusers of men, and railers and slanderers of the best and greatest of men, and the origin of all the blasphemies that are vented against God or men; but of good angels, who excel in strength, who are not only guardians to particular men, and encamp about the saints, but preside over provinces and kingdoms, for which their power and might do abundantly qualify them; and in which they are greater, that is, not than the devils, or than the false teachers, though both are true, but than dominions and dignities, than kings, princes, and civil magistrates: and yet these

Bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord] Either "against themselves," as the Arabic version, and one of *Beza's* copies read; against one another, against those of their own species, that are in a higher or lower class or office than themselves; and therefore men ought not to despise magistracy, or the higher powers that are over them: or else against the fallen angels, the devils, as should seem from *Jude* 9. or rather against civil magistrates, kings, and princes of this world, who, though so much below them, they vouchsafe to take under their care, and protect them, even heathen princes, *Dan.* x. 20. and though there may be oftentimes many things unbecoming in them, yet they do not accuse them, or rail against them before the Lord; and even when, by his orders, they inflict punishment on their persons, as on Sennacherib, and Herod, and others, yet they do not speak evil of their office; and therefore, since angels, who are so much above men, even above the most dignified among them, behave in this manner, it must be an aggravation of the sin of these persons, who are so much below them, to speak evil of them.

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made

R r

made

made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

But these, as natural brute beasts] So far are these men from acting like the angels, that they are sunk below their own species, and are like beasts, and become brutish in their knowledge and behaviour; are like the horse and the mule, without understanding, act as if they were without reason; yea, are more stupid and senseless than the ox, or the ass, which know their owner, and their crib; and even in those things which they might, and do know by the light of nature, they corrupt themselves; and being given up to judicial blindness, and a reprobate mind, call good evil, and evil good, and do things that are not convenient, and which even brute beasts do not; and like as they are guided by an instinct in nature, to do what they do, so these men are led and influenced by the force and power of corrupt nature in them, to commit all manner of wickedness: and like them are

Made to be taken and destroyed] Or, as it may be rendered, "to take and destroy;" as beasts and birds of prey, such as lions, tigers, wolves, bears, vultures, hawks, &c. to which abusers of themselves with mankind, ravishers of women, extortioners, oppressors, thieves, robbers, and plunderers of men's properties, may be compared: or "to be taken and destroyed;" that is, they are made or appointed to be taken in the net and snare of Satan, are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and are afore ordained to condemnation and ruin: and this being their case, they

Speak evil of the things they understand not] Either of angels, of whose nature, office, and dignity they are ignorant; and blaspheme them, by either ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world, and divine worship, as were by some ancient heretics; or by speaking such things of them as were below them, and unworthy of them; or of civil magistrates, not knowing the nature, and end of magistracy and civil government, and therefore spoke evil of them, when they ought to pray, and be thankful for them, and live peaceable and quiet lives under them; or of the ministers of the word, whose usefulness for the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, were not known, at least not acknowledged by these men; hence they were traduced, and went through ill report among them, being as unknown by them; or of the scriptures of truth, which heretical men do not truly know and understand, but wrest to their own destruction, or deny; and

of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which are things not seen, known, and understood by carnal men, and therefore are blasphemed, reviled, and reproached by them.

And shall utterly perish in their own corruption] Of which they are servants, *7. 19.* in their moral corruption, in their filthy and unnatural lusts, which are the cause of their everlasting perdition and destruction, to which they are righteously appointed of God.

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness] Due punishment, both in body and soul, for all their injustice to God and men; which will be a just recompence of reward they shall receive at the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works: the justice of which appears by what follows,

As they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time] Who place all their satisfaction and happiness in sensual delight, in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, day after day; putting away the evil day far from them, supposing that to-morrow will be as this day, and that there will be no future judgment nor state; and therefore do not take the night for their revels, as other sinners do, but being without all shame, declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not.

Spots they are and blemishes] Which defile themselves, their minds and consciences, their souls and bodies, with sin, and defile others by their evil communications, and bring dishonour and disgrace upon the ways, doctrines, and interest of Christ.

Sporting themselves with their own deceivings] With their sins and lusts, by which they deceive themselves and others, it being a sport to them to commit sin; and in which they take great pleasure and pastime, and not only delight in their own sins, but in those of others, and in them that do them. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, instead of *avolant, deceivings*, read *asensu, love feasts*, as in *Jude 12.* and so the Alexandrian copy; in which they behaved in a very scandalous manner, indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance: to which agrees what follows,

While they feast with you] At the above feasts, or

or at the Lord's table, or at their own houses, which shews that they were of them, and among them, as in *y. i.* and carries in it a tacit reproof for the continuance of them, when they were become so bad in their principles, and so scandalous in their lives.

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

Having eyes full of adultery] For the seventh command is not only violated by unclean actions, and obscene words, but also by unchaste looks: and so the Jews explain (*k*) that precept, "*thou shalt not commit adultery*; you shall not go after your hearts, nor after your eyes; says R. Levi, the heart and the eye are sin's two brokers." Hence we read (*l*) of *בני עין*, "one that commits adultery with his eyes;" see the note on *Matt. v. 28.* compare *Job xxxi. 1.* *Ezek. vi. 9.* Some read the words, "having eyes full of the adulterers;" that is, having a lewd and infamous woman always in mind and sight, continually looking at her, and lusting after her.

And that cannot cease from sin] Which may be understood either of these wicked men, who are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but are continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin out of their polluted heart; who live and walk in sin, and are always committing it, their conversation being nothing else but one continued series of sinning; nor can they do otherwise, since they are slaves to their lusts, and are carried away with the force and power of them: or of their eyes, which were always rolling after unlawful objects; their eyes and their hearts were only, and always for their lust, as the prophet says of others, that they were but for their covetousness, *Jer. xxii. 17.* a sin also which reigned in these men.

Beguiling unstable souls] Such as were unsteady in their principles, and unstable in their ways; were like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, not being rooted in Christ, nor established in the faith; these, as the serpent beguiled Eve, they corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; imposed false doctrines on them, and deceived them by false glosses, and outward appearances; and by fair words, and good speeches, and by their wanton looks, and carnal lusts, they allured them into the sin of adultery;

or ensnared them, drew them into the net and snare of Satan, and so they were taken and led captive.

An heart they have exercised with covetous practices] An immoderate love of money, a covetous desire after it, is the root of all evil, the bane of religion, and source of heresy, and is a vice which has always prevailed among false teachers; and the character here given, well agrees with Simon Magus, the father of heresies, and his followers: hence care is always taken to insert, among the characters and qualifications of Gospel-ministers, that they be not greedy of filthy lucre; this iniquity, when it is a reigning one, and is become an habit, as it was in the persons here described, for it had its seat in their heart, they were habituated to it, and continually exercised it in a multitude of instances and wicked practices, is insatiable and damnable.

Cursed children] Or "children of the curse;" which may be understood, either actively, children that do curse, as children of disobedience are such as commit acts of disobedience; so these were cursing children, who, though their mouths might not be full of cursing and bitterness, as openly profane sinners be, yet they inwardly, and from their hearts, cursed the true followers of Christ, and their principles; or passively, cursed children who were under the curse of the law, and from which there was no redemption for them, but at the last day will have the awful sentence pronounced on them, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

Which have forsaken the right way] The right way of the Lord, the way of truth, the Gospel of truth; or Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; the true way to eternal life, and which is the right way to eternal happiness; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, the christian faith, and the doctrine of it, which they once professed, but now relinquished.

And are gone astray] From the right way, the way of truth and holiness, into the paths of error and profaneness.

Following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor] Which Jude calls his error, and is the path of covetousness, uncleanness, and idolatry, sins which he was either guilty of himself, or taught, advised, and seduced others to; see *Rev. ii. 14.*

(1) T. Himpf. Betancot, fol. 3. 3. (2) Vajikra Rabba, 5. 23. fol. 165. 1. Vid. A. Gell. Noth. Astic. 4. 3. c. 3.

The Vulgate Latin version reads Balaam out of Bosor, taking Bosor for the name of a place, of which Balaam was; but not Bosor, but Pethor was the place of Balaam's residence, *Numb. xxii. 5*. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, as we do, "the son of Bosor;" and the Syriac version reads, "the son of Beor," as in *Numb. xxii. 5*. for Beor and Bosor are the same names. The Sheva being pronounced by o, as it is by oa in Boanerges, and the Ain by S. Moreover, the letters *r* and *v* are sometimes used for one another, as in *par* and *qar*, *ram* and *vam*, and so *v* and *w*, especially in the Chaldean dialect; and Peter now being at Babylon in Chaldea, see *1 Peter v. 13*. it is no wonder that he so pronounced.

Who loved the wages of unrighteousness] Which were the rewards of divination, *Numb. xxii. 7*. which were brought him for his divining or sooth-saying, and may well be called unrighteous wages, since it was for doing unrighteous things, or things in an unrighteous manner; and these he loved, desired, and greedily coveted, and fain would he have taken Balak's gold and silver, and have cursed Israel, but was restrained by the Lord: he shewed a good-will to it, in going along with the messengers, and in building altars, and offering sacrifice in one place after another, in which there was a great resemblance between him, and the men here spoken of.

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

But was rebuked for his iniquity] Which was not merely going along with the messengers of Balak, for he had leave from the Lord so to do; but going along with them with a desire to curse Israel, when it was the will of God he should go and bless them, in order to get Balak's money; so that his governing iniquity was covetousness, which led him to other sins; and for this he was rebuked by the angel, as well as reproved by his ass: for

The dumb ass] As it was naturally so, the ass on which he rode,

Speaking with man's voice] Which was supernatural and miraculous, for it was God that opened the mouth of the ass: the mouth of that ass is said, by the Jews (*m*); to be one of the ten things created between the two evenings on the sixth day of the creation; that is, as the Gloss on it says, concerning which it was decreed, that its mouth should be opened to speak, what this

ass said; and the occasion of it may be seen in *Numb. xxii. 22—30*. Lactantius (*n*) observes, that there are two stars in the constellation of Cancer, which the Greeks call the asses; and which the poets feign, are those that carried Liberus over a river, when he could not pass it; to one of which he gave this for a reward, *ut humana voce loqueretur*, "that it should speak with man's voice;" a fable, no doubt, hatched from the sacred history, and said in imitation of this ass. Which

Forbad the madness of the prophet] And so Balaam, though a diviner and sooth-sayer, is called by the Jewish writers (*o*); who, they say, was first a prophet, and then a sooth-sayer, from whom Jerom (*p*) seems to have received the tradition; who says, that he was first a holy man, and a prophet of God, and afterwards, through disobedience, and a desire of gifts, was called a diviner; for his eyes were opened, and he saw the vision of the Almighty; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied many things concerning Israel, and the Messiah, and others, *Numb. xxiv*. His *madness* lay in going with the messengers of Balak, in order to curse Israel, contrary to the will of God; and it is madness in any to oppose God in his counsels, purposes, providences, and precepts; and every sin, which is an act of hostility against God, has madness in it; and this of Balaam's was forbid by his ass, and he was convinced of it. Very appositely is mention made of this dumb ass, when the persons here spoken of were as natural brute beasts, and worse than them, *Job. 12*.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

These are wells without water] Which look large and deep, promise much, and have nothing in them; so these men looked like angels of light, transformed themselves as ministers of righteousness, had a form of godliness, and boasted of their great knowledge; promised great advantages to their followers, but were like deceitful brooks, or dry wells, and so disappointed those that came to them, and attended on them; having nothing but the filth and slime of error and iniquity, being destitute both of the grace of God, comparable to water, and of the truth of heavenly doctrine, which is like the rain that fills the wells, pools, and fountain.

Clouds

(*m*) Pirke Aboi, c. 3. §. 6. & Jarchi in *Mid. Sopher*, *Coski*, par. 2. p. 254.

(*n*) De falsa Religione, l. 1. c. 21. (*o*) Pesikta, Ilmedean & Gerundenis apud Dros. in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 106. 1. Aben Ezra in *Numb. xlii. 28*. (*p*) Tradition, Heb. in Gen. fol. 69. D.

Clouds that are carried with a tempest] These false teachers may be compared to *clouds* for their number, for many antichrists and false prophets soon came into the world; and for their sudden rise in the churches, into which they crept privily and unawares; and because of the general darkness they spread, for when errors and heresies prevail, it is a dark and cloudy day with the churches, a day of gloominess and darkness, of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and because of the height of them, especially light clouds, as these are compared to, who are high in their own conceits and imaginations, and think, and give out themselves to be some great persons; and also because of their sudden destruction, which lingers and flumbers not, but comes upon them in a moment, and their glory passes away like the morning cloud: and these may be said to be as clouds *carried with a tempest*; of their own lusts and passions, by which they are governed, and are led, and carried away with the force of them, and have no power to resist them, being under the dominion of them, and captives to them; and of Satan's temptations, who works effectually in them, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and being taken in his snare, are led captive by him at his will: Jude says, *carried about of winds*; with every wind of false doctrine, like meteors in the air; are never at a point, always unsteady and unsettled, and ready to embrace every new and upstart notion.

To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever] The nature of their punishment is expressed by *darkness*, the blackest darkness, the mist of darkness, and which Jude calls blackness of darkness, the same with utter darkness; and which signifies a most forlorn and uncomfortable condition, and is a righteous judgment, and just retaliation upon them, who studied to darken counsel by words without knowledge; and the certainty of their punishment is signified by its being *reserved*, even as the happiness of the saints, and the safety and sureness of it, are represented by an inheritance reserved in heaven: and as God has his treasures, magazines, and stores of grace and mercy, felicity and glory, for his people; so he has his wrath and vengeance reserved, laid up in store with him, and sealed up among his treasures, which he will surely bring forth in his own time: and the duration of this punishment is *for ever*; it is a worm that never dies, a fire that is never quenched; it is everlasting fire and burnings, the smoke of which ascends for ever and ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the

lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

For when they speak great swelling words of vanity] Marvellous things against the God of gods, great things and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and his saints; see *Dan. xi. 36. Rev. xiii. 5, 6.* or against men, dominions, and dignities, *1. 10.* or it may design their self-applauses, and vain-glorying in themselves, and their empty boast of knowledge and learning; and also express the windiness of their doctrines, and the bombast stile, and high flown strains of rhetoric in which they were delivered; as likewise the flattering titles they bestowed on men, for the sake of their own worldly interest and advantage; see *Jude 16.* and hereby

They allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error] That is, from those who lived in the error of heathenism or judaism, from whom, and which they were clean escaped; or truly, really, and entirely delivered, being fully convinced of the falsity thereof, and of the truth of the christian religion; though some copies, as the Alexandrian, and two of Beza's, and two of Stephens's, read, not *clean*, truly, but *almost*, a little; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a very little;" to which agrees the Complutensian edition; and the Syriac version renders it "in a few words," or "almost;" and according to the Ethiopic version, "a few persons" are designed; but be they more or less, and truly, or but a little, and for a little while, or almost, escaped from their former errors, in which they were brought up, and lived; yet by the carnal lusts and liberties, lasciviousness and wantonness, which these false teachers indulged, they were allured, ensnared, and drawn by them into their wicked principles and practices.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

While they promise them liberty] Not christian liberty, which lies in a freedom from sin, its dominion, guilt, and condemnation, and in serving God with liberty, cheerfulness, and without fear; but a sinful carnal liberty, a liberty from the law of God, from obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, and from the laws of men, from subjection to the civil magistrate, and from servitude to masters, and obedience to parents; a liberty to lay aside and neglect the ordinances of the

the Gospel at pleasure, and to live in all manner of sin and wickedness; a liberty which is contrary to the nature, will, and work of Christ, to his Spirit, and to the principle of grace in the heart, and to the Gospel, and to the conduct and conversation of real saints. Now this was the snare by which the false teachers beguiled unstable souls; liberty being what is greatly desirable to men, and is suited to their carnal lusts and interests: but a vain promise was this, when

They themselves are the servants of corruption] Of sin, which has corrupted all mankind in soul and body; and particularly the lust of uncleanness, which these men walked in, and by which they not only corrupted themselves, but the good manners of others also; and which tended and led them both to ruin and destruction, signified by the pit of corruption: and yet these very preachers, that promised liberty to others, were the servants of sin; they were under the power and government of sin. They were not only born so, and were home-born slaves to sin, but they sold themselves to work wickedness, voluntarily and with delight, they served divers lusts and pleasures, and were slaves and drudges thereunto; as likewise to Satan, whose lusts they would do, and by whom they were led captive; so that their condition was mean, base, and deplorable, and therefore could never make good their promise, or give that which they had not themselves; and which is confirmed by the following reasoning,

For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage] As this is a certain point in war, that when one man is conquered by another, he is no longer a free man, but the other's prisoner and captive, and is in a state of servitude and bondage; so it is when a man is overcome by sin, which must be understood not of a partial victory or conquest, for a good man may be surprized by sin, and overtaken in a fault, and be overcome and carried captive by it for a time, as was the apostle; see *Rom. vii. 23. Gal. vi. 1.* and yet not be a servant of corruption, or properly in a state of bondage to it; but this is to be understood of a total and compleat victory: when a man is wholly under the dominion of sin, it reigns in his mortal body, and he obeys it in the lusts of it, and yields his members instruments of unrighteousness; such a man is neither a free man himself, nor can he much less promise and give liberty to others.

20 *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and over-*

come, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world] The sins of it, the governing vices of it, which the men of the world are addicted to, and immersed in; for the whole world lies in wickedness, and which are of a defiling nature; the phrase is Rabbinical; it is said (g), "he that studies not in the law in this world, but is defiled with the pollutions of the world," what is written of him? and they took "him, and cast him without:" these men may escape, abstain from, and outwardly reform, with respect unto, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; so that this can be no instance of the final and total apostacy of real saints; for the house may be swept and garnished with an external reformation; persons may be outwardly righteous before men, have a form of godliness and a name to live, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins; all which they may have

Through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ] The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read "our Lord," and the latter leave out, "and Saviour;" by which knowledge is meant, not a spiritual, experimental knowledge of Christ, for that is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; but a notional knowledge of Christ, or a profession of knowledge of him, for it may be rendered acknowledgment; or rather the Gospel of Christ, which, being only notionally received, may have such an effect on men, as outwardly to reform their lives, at least in some instances, and for a while, in whose hearts it has no place. Now, if after all this knowledge and reformation,

They are again entangled therein] In the pollutions of the world, in worldly lusts, which are as gins, pits and snares.

And overcome] By them, so as to be laden with them, and led away, and entirely governed and influenced by them.

The latter end is worse with them than the beginning] Or state; see *Mat. xiii. 45.* Their beginning, or first estate, was that in which they were born, a state of darkness, ignorance, and sin, and in which they were brought up, and was either the state of Judaism, or of Gentilism; their next estate was an outward deliverance and escape, from the error of the one, or of the other, and an embracing and professing the truth of the Christian religion, joined with a becoming external conversation;

(g) Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3. Vid. Bechimot Olam, p. 178.

sation; and this their last estate was an apostacy from the truth of the Gospel they had professed, a reception of error and hereby, and a relapse into sin and immorality, which made their case worse, than it was at first; for, generally, such persons are more extravagant in sinning; are like raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; and are seldom, or ever, recovered; and by their light, knowledge and profession, their punishment will be more aggravated, and become intolerable.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

For it had been better for them] Not that ignorance is good, or to be excused; but it would have been a lesser evil, and not so much aggravated.

Not to have known the way of righteousness] The same with *the way of truth*, *§. 21.* and *the right way*, *§. 15.* the Gospel, which points out the way and method of a sinner's justification before God, which is not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith; and which teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and a large, notional, though not an experimental knowledge, these apostates had, of the word and doctrine of righteousness, and indeed of the whole of the Christian religion, which may truly go by this name.

Then, after they have known it] Owned, embraced, and professed it,

To turn] The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, add, "to that which is behind;" to their former lusts, or errors, or worse, which they had turned their backs upon externally.

From the holy commandment delivered unto them] By the *commandment* is meant the Gospel also, see chap. iii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 14; called *holy*, because of its nature and influence; and in opposition to the pollutions of the world; and which is the faith once delivered, *Jude 3.* and which they received, as delivered to them; and, particularly, the ordinances of it, which they once submitted to, kept, and observed, as they were delivered to them, but now relinquished, or corrupted: wherefore, it would have been better for them to have been in their former ignorance, either in Judaism, or in Gentilism, since proportionate to a man's

light is his guilt, and so his punishment, see *Rom. ii. 12.* *Luke xii. 47, 48.*

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb] Which is true, both in fact, and in the application of it, and which lies in the scriptures of truth, at least the first part of it, *Prov. xxvi. 11.*

The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire] Which expresses the filthy nature of sin, signified by vomit, mire and dirt, than which nothing is more abominable and defiling; and also the just characters of these apostates, who are fitly compared to dogs and swine; and likewise their irreclaimable and irrecoverable state and condition, it being impossible they should be otherwise, unless their natures were changed and altered. In the Hebrew language, a *sow* is called *חז* from the root *ח*, which signifies to return, because that creature, as soon as it is out of the mire and dirt, and is washed from its filthiness, naturally returns to it again: so such apostates return to what they were before; to their former principles and practices: in this manner the Jews explain the proverb, "Tobiah returns to Tobiah, as it is said, *Prov. xxvi. 11.* as a dog returneth to his vomit (r)." *Prov. xxvi. 11.*

C H A P. III.

In this chapter the apostle makes mention of the end and design of his writing this second epistle; foretels that there would be scoffers at the coming of Christ in the last days; describes the coming of Christ, and the burning of the world; and closes with the use saints should make of these things. The end of his writing both this and the former epistle, was to put the persons he writes unto in mind of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, delivered by the prophets and apostles, *§. 1, 2.* and then, agreeable to what the prophets had said, he predicts, that there would be scoffers in the last day, who are described by their sinful course of life, and by their words, what they would say concerning the coming of Christ, and their reasoning about it, *§. 3, 4.* which arose from their ignorance of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the situation of them; and

and is refuted by shewing that things have not remained as they were from the creation; that the earth standing in and out of the water, as it was capable of being overflowed with a flood, so it perished by one; and that the present heavens and earth are reserved and prepared for a general burning at the day of judgment, in which wicked men will be destroyed, *1. 5—7.* but let these men scoff as they will, the length of time since the promise of Christ's coming was made, should be no objection with the saints to the performance of it; since the longest term of time is nothing with God, however considerable it may be with men, *1. 8.* besides, the reason of the coming of Christ being deferred, is not owing to any dilatoriness in the performance of the promise, but to the long-suffering of God towards his elect, being unwilling that any one of them should be lost, but that all should be brought to repentance, *1. 9.* but as for the coming of Christ, that is certain, and will be sudden; at which time will be the general conflagration, which is described in a very awful manner, *1. 10—12.* and the use to be made of such a tremendous dispensation by the saints, is to live a holy and godly conversation, *1. 13.* to be eagerly looking for the coming of Christ, *1. 12.* and to expect, according to his promise, new heavens and a new earth, in which will dwell righteous persons, *1. 13.* and to be diligent to be found in peace at that day, *1. 14.* and to account the long-suffering of God salvation; and the whole of this account, and the use of it, is strengthened by the testimony of the apostle Paul, of whom, and of his epistles, a character is given, *1. 15, 16.* and the epistle is concluded with some cautions and exhortations to the saints, to beware lest they should be carried away with the errors of wicked men, and so fall from any degree of steadfastness in the faith; and to be concerned for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, to whom glory is to be ascribed for ever and ever, *1. 17, 18.*

THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you] This is a transition to another part of the epistle; for the apostle having largely described false teachers, the secret enemies of the christian religion under a profession of it, passes on to take notice of the more open adversaries and profane scoffers of it; and from their ridicule of the doctrine of

Christ's second coming, he proceeds to treat of that, and of the destruction of the world, and the future happiness of the saints: he calls this epistle his *second epistle*, because he had written another before to the same persons; and that the author of this epistle was an apostle, is evident from the following verse; and which compared with chap. i. 18, shews him to be the apostle Peter, whose name it bears, and who was an eye-witness to the transfiguration of Christ on the mount: he addresses these saints here, as also in *1. 8, 14, 17.* under the character of *beloved*; because they were the beloved of God, being chosen by him according to his foreknowledge, and regenerated by him, according to his abundant mercy; and were openly his people, and had obtained mercy from him, and like precious faith with the apostles; and were also the beloved of Christ, being redeemed by him, not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood; for whom he suffered, and who were partakers of his sufferings, and the benefits arising from them, and who had all things given them by him, pertaining to life and godliness, and exceeding great and precious promises; and were likewise beloved by the apostle, though strangers, and not merely as Jews, or because they were his countrymen, but because they were the elect of God, the redeemed of Christ, and who were sanctified by the Spirit, and had the same kind of faith he himself had. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "my beloved;" and the Ethiopic version, "my brethren:" his end in writing both this and the former epistle follows;

In both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance] That this was his view both in this and the former epistle, appears from *1 Peter i. 13.* and *2 Peter i. 12—15.* he calls their *minds pure*; not that they were so naturally, for the minds and consciences of men are universally defiled with sin; nor are the minds of all men pure who seem to be so in their own eyes, or appear so to others; nor can any man, by his own power or works, make himself pure from sin; only the blood of Christ purges and cleanses from it; and a pure mind is a mind sprinkled with that blood, and which receives the truth as it is in Jesus, in the power and purity of it, and that holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, render the word *sincere*, as it is in *Phil. i. 10.* and may design the sincerity of their hearts in the worship of God, in the doctrines of Christ, and to one another, and of the grace of the Spirit of God in them; as that their faith was unfeigned, their hope without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation, and their repentance real and genuine; but yet they

they needed to be stirred up by way of remembrance, both of the truth of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; for saints are apt to be forgetful of the word, both of its doctrines and its exhortations; and it is the business of the ministers of the word, to put them in mind of them, either by preaching or by writing; and which shews the necessity and usefulness of the standing ministry of the Gospel: the particulars he put them in mind of, next follow.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

That ye may be mindful] This is an explanation of the above-mentioned end of his writing this and the other epistle; which was, that those saints might be mindful of two things more especially.

Of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets] That is, the prophets of the Old Testament, who were holy men of God, and therefore their words are to be regarded, and retained in memory; the Gospel itself was spoken by them, and so was Christ, and the things relating to his person and offices, and to his incarnation, sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow; and indeed the apostles said no other than what they did, only more clearly and expressly; and particularly many things were said by them concerning the second coming of Christ to judge the world, and destroy it, and to prepare now heavens and a new earth for his people, which is what the apostle has chiefly in view; see *Jude* 14. *Isaiah* xi. 3. and chap. lxxv. 17. *Mal.* iv. 1. *Dan.* vii. 9, 10, 13, 14.

And of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour] That is, Jesus Christ, as *Jude* expresses it, and the Ethiopic version adds here; and which likewise, and also the Syriac version, and some ancient copies read, "our Lord and Saviour," and omit the *us* before the apostles; by whom are meant, the twelve apostles of Christ, of which Peter was one, and therefore says, *us the apostles*; though the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition read, "your apostles," and so the Alexandrian copy; but the former is the received reading: now the commandment of these intends either the Gospel in general, so called because it was the commandment of our Lord to his apostles to preach it; and therefore the word *commandment* in the original, stands between *us the apostles*, and *the Lord and Saviour*, as being the commandment of the one to the other; unless it can be thought any regard is had to the

new commandment of love, or that of faith, inculcated both by Christ and his apostles; *John* xiii. 34. *1 John* ii. 7, 8. and chap. iii. 23. or rather, particularly the instructions, directions, and predictions of the apostles concerning the second coming of Christ, and what should go before it, as appears from the following words, and the parallel place in *Jude* 17, 18. the words of the prophets and apostles being here put together, shew the agreement there is between them, and what regard is to be had to each of them, and to any thing and every thing in which they agree.

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

Knowing this first] In the first place, principally, and chiefly, and which might easily be known and observed from the writings of the apostles and prophets; see *1 Tim.* iv. 1, 2. *2 Tim.* iii. 1.

That there shall come in the last days scoffers] Or mockers; such as would make a mock at sin, make light of it, plead for it, openly commit it, and glory in it; and scoff at all religion, as the prejudice of education, as an engine of state, a piece of civil policy, to keep subjects in awe, as cant, enthusiasm, and madness, as a gloomy melancholy thing, depriving men of true pleasure; and throw out their flouts and jeers at those that are the most religious, for the just, upright man, is commonly by such laughed to scorn, and those that depart from evil make themselves a prey; and particularly at the ministers of the word, for a man that has scarcely so much common sense as to preserve him from the character of an idiot, thinks himself a wit of the age, if he can at any rate break a jest upon a Gospel minister: nor do the scriptures of truth escape the banter and burlesque of these scoffers; the doctrines of it being foolishness to them, and the commands and ordinances in it being grievous and intolerable to them; yea, to those lengths do such proceed, as to scoff at God himself; at his persons, purposes, providences, and promises; at Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, and especially as the God and father of Christ, and of all grace in him; at Jehovah the Son, at his person, as being the Son of God, and truly God; at his office, as mediator, and at his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which they trample under foot; and at Jehovah the Spirit, whom they do despite unto, as the Spirit of grace, deriding his operations in regeneration and sanctification, as dream and delusion; and most of all, things to come are the object of their scorn and derision; as the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, a

future judgment, the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; all which they represent as the tricks and juggles of designing men: such as these, according to the prophets and apostles, were to come *in the last days*; either in the days of the Messiah, in the Gospel-dispensation, the times between the first and second coming of Christ; for it is a rule with the Jews (*s*), that wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended; see *Heb. i. 1.* when the prophets foretold such scoffers should come; or in the last days of the Jewish state both civil and religious, called *the ends of the world*; *1 Cor. x. 11.* a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when iniquity greatly abounded; *Matt. xxiv. 11, 12.* or *in the last of the days*, as the words may be rendered, and so answer to באחרית הימים, in *Isaiah ii. 2.* and may regard the latter part of the last times; the times of the apostles were the last days, *1 John ii. 18.* they began then, and will continue to Christ's second coming; when some time before that, it will be a remarkable age for scoffers and scorers; and we have lived to see an innumerable company of them, and these predictions fulfilled; from whence it may be concluded, that the coming of Christ is at hand: these scoffers are further described as

Walking after their own lusts] Either after the carnal reasonings of their minds, admitting of nothing but what they can comprehend by reason, making that the rule, test and standard of all their principles, and so cast away the law of the Lord, and despise the word of the holy one of Israel; or rather, after their sinful and fleshly lusts, making them their guides and governors, and giving up themselves entirely to them, to obey and fulfil them; the phrase denotes a continued series of sinning, a progress in it, a desire after it, and pleasure in it, and an obstinate persisting in it: scoffers at religion and revelation, are generally libertines; and such as sit in the seat of the scornful, are in the counsel of the ungodly, and way of sinners, *Psalms i. 1.*

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?] That is, of the coming of the Lord and Saviour, *2. 2.* the object of their scorn and derision, and whom they name not, through contempt; and the meaning is, What is become of the promise of his coming? where the accomplishment of it? The prophets foretold he would come; he him-

self said he would come again; the angels, at his ascension, declared he would come from heaven in like manner as he went up; and all his apostles gave out, that he would appear a second time to judge both quick and dead, and that his coming was at hand; but where is the fulfilment of all this? he is not come, nor is there any sign or likelihood of it.

For since the fathers fell asleep] Or *died*; which is the language of the scriptures, and here sneered at by these men, who believe them so fast asleep as never to be awaked, or raised more; and by *the fathers* they mean the first inhabitants of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, &c. and all the patriarchs and prophets in all ages; the Ethiopic version renders it, "our first fathers."

All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation] Reasoning, from the settled order of things, the constant revolution of the sun, moon, and stars, the permanency of the earth, and the succession of the inhabitants of it, to the future continuance of things, without any alteration; and consequently, that Christ would not come, as was promised, to raise the dead, judge mankind, destroy the world, and set up a new state of things: the fallacy of which reasoning is exposed by the apostle in the following words.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

For this they willingly are ignorant of] Namely, what follows; for as these men were such as had professed christianity, and had the advantage of revelation, and had the opportunity of reading the scriptures, they might have known that the heavens and the earth were from the beginning; and that they were made by the word of God; and that the earth was originally in such a position and situation as to be overflowed with a flood, and that it did perish by a general inundation; and that the present heavens and earth are kept and reserved for a general burning; and it might be discerned in nature, that there are preparations making for an universal conflagration; but all this they chose not to know, and affected ignorance of: particularly

That by the word of God the heavens were of old] Not only in the times of Noah, but "from the beginning," as the Ethiopic version reads, and which agrees with the account in *Gen. i. 1.* by *the heavens* may be meant both the third heavens, and the starry heavens, and the airy heavens, with all their created inhabitants; and especially the latter,

latter, since these were concerned in, and affected with the general deluge; and these were in the beginning of time, out of nothing brought into being, and so were not eternal, and might be destroyed again, or at least undergo a change, even though they were of old, and of long duration: for it was *by the word of God* that they at first existed, and were so long preserved in being; either by the commanding word of God, by his powerful voice, his almighty fiat, who said, Let it be done, and it was done, and who commanded beings to rise up out of nothing, and they did, and stood fast; and so the Arabic version renders it, “by the command of God;” or by his eternal Logos, the essential word of God, the second person in the Trinity, who is often in scripture called the word, and the word of God, and as some think, by the apostle Peter, 1 Peter i. 23. and certain it is that the creation of all things is frequently ascribed to him; see John i. 1—3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 10. and xi. 3. wherefore, by the same word they might be dissolved, and made to pass away, as they will.

And the earth standing out of the water and in the water] That is, *by the word of God*; for this phrase in the original text, is placed after this clause, and last of all; and refers not only to the being of the heavens of old, but to the rise, standing, and subsistence of the earth, which is here particularly described for the sake of the deluge, the apostle afterwards mentions: and it is said to be *standing out of the water, or consisting out of it*; it consists of it as a part; the globe of the earth is terraqueous, partly land and partly water; and even the dry land itself has its rise and spring out of water; the first matter that was created is called the deep, and waters in which darkness was, and upon which the Spirit of God moved, Gen. i. 2. agreeable to which Thales the Milesian asserted (1), that water was the principle of all things; and the Ethiopic version here renders the words thus, “and the word of God created also the earth out of water, and confirmed it:” the Jews say (u), “at first the world was מים,” “water in water:” however, certain it is, that the earth was first covered with water, when at the word, and by the command of God, the waters fled and hasted away, and were gathered into one place, and the dry land rose up and appeared; and then it was that it *flood out of the water*; see Gen. i. 9, 10. Psalm civ. 6, 7. moreover, the earth consists, or is kept and held together by water; there is a general humidity or moisture that runs through it, by which it is

compacted together, or otherwise it would resolve into dust, and by which it is fit for the production, increase, and preservation of vegetables and other things, which it otherwise would not be; and it is also said to stand *in the water, or by the water*; upon it, according to Psalm xxiv. 2. or rather in the midst of it, there being waters above the firmament or expanse, in the airy heavens, in the clouds all around the earth, called the windows of heaven; and water below the firmament or expanse, in the earth itself; besides the great sea, a large body of waters, is in the midst of the earth, in the very bowels of it, which feed rivers, and form springs, fountains and wells, called the fountains of the great deep; and in this position and situation was the earth of old, and so was prepared in nature for a general deluge, and yet was preserved firm and stable by the word of God, for a long series of time; so the Arabic version renders it, and “and the earth out of the water, and in the water stood stable, by the command of God;” but when it was his pleasure, he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, of which an account follows.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

Whereby the world that then was] The old world, as it is called in chapter ii. 5. and as the Ethiopic version here renders it; the world before the flood, that had stood from the creation 1656 years.

Being overflowed with water] By the windows of heaven being opened, and the waters over the earth poured down upon it; and by the fountains of the great deep being broken up in it; thus by these waters from above and below, a general inundation was brought upon it; for that the deluge was universal, is clear from hence, and from the account by Moses; for as the earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way, God threatened a general destruction, and which was brought by a flood, which overflowed the whole earth; for all the hills that were under the whole heaven were covered with it, and every thing that had life in the dry land died, and every living substance was destroyed, that was upon the face of the ground; see Gen. vi. 11—13. and chap. vii. 11, 19, 22, 23. and hence it follows, that hereby the then world

Perished] Not as to the substance of it, whatever alteration there might be in its form and position; but as to the inhabitants of it; for all creatures, men and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowls of the heaven were destroyed, excepting Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their

(1) Vid. Laert. l. i. in vit. Thalesi.
Sic, fol. 77. 1.

(u) T. Hieros. Cha-

ps. 2. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

wives, and the creatures that are with him in the ark; see *Gen. vii. 23. 1 Pet. iii. 20.* and by this instance the apostle shews the falshood of the above assertion, that all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; for the earth was covered with water at first, and which, by the command of God, was removed, and after a long series of time, was brought on it again, and by it drowned; and from whence it also appears, that this sort of reasoning used by those scoffers, is very fallacious; for though the heavens and the earth may continue for a long time, as they did before the flood, in the same form and situation, it does not follow from thence, that they always will, for the contrary is evident from what follows.

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now] In being, in distinction from, and opposition to the heavens that were of old, and the earth standing in and out of the water, and the world that then was when the waters of the flood overflowed it.

By the same word are kept in store] That is, by the word of God, as in *ψ. 5.* and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "by his word;" by the same word that the heavens, and the earth were made of old, or in the beginning, are they kept, preserved, and upheld in their being; or "are treasured up;" the heavens and the earth are a rich treasure, they are full of the riches of God, as the God of nature and providence; and they are kept with care, as a treasure is, not to be touched or meddled with at present, but must continue in the same position and use; or they are laid up in the stores, and sealed up among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, and will be brought out another day, and made use of, to the destruction of the ungodly inhabitants of the world, and to aggravate and increase their misery and ruin: for it is further said of them, that they are

Reserved unto fire] For though the world is, and has been preserved a long time without any visible alteration in it, yet it will not be always so preserved; and though it is, and will be kept from being drowned by water again, through the promise and power of God, yet it is kept and reserved for a general conflagration; see *ψ. 10, 12.* And as the old world was put into a natural situation, so as to be drowned by water, there are now preparations making in nature, in the present world, for the burning of it; witness the

fiery meteors, blazing stars, and burning comets in the heavens, and the subterraneous fires in the bowels of the earth, which in some places have already broke out: there are now many Volcanos, burning mountains and islands, particularly in Sicily, Italy, and the parts adjacent, the seat of the beast, and where it is very likely the universal conflagration will begin, as *Ætna, Vesuvius, Strömbilo,* and other volcanos; and even in our own island we have some symptoms and appearances of these fires under ground, as fiery eruptions in some places, and the hot waters at the Bath, and elsewhere, shew; from all which, it is plain, that the heavens and earth, that now are, are not, as they always were, and will be, but are reserved and prepared for burning; and that things are ripening apace, as mens sins also are, for the general conflagration. Josephus (*w*) relates, that Adam foretold that there would be a destruction of all things, once by the force of fire, and once by the power and multitude of water; and it is certain the Jews had knowledge of the destruction of the earth by fire, as by water: they say (*x*), "a flood of water the Lord will not bring, but, *וּמַלְאָהּ מַיִם*, a flood of fire he will bring, as it is said, *Isaiah lxvi. 16.* for by fire will the Lord plead," or judge: and hence they speak (*y*) of the wicked being judged with two sorts of judgments, by water, and by fire: and, according to our apostle, the heavens and earth are kept and reserved to fire.

Against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men] The time when God will judge the world is fixed, though it is not known; and it is called a day, because of the evidence and light in which things will appear, and the quick dispatch of business in it; and the judgment spoken of is the future judgment, and which is certain, and will be universal, righteous, and eternal, and when wicked and ungodly men will be punished with everlasting destruction: the bodies of those that will be alive at the general conflagration, will be burnt in it, though not annihilated, and will be raised again, and both soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing] Here the apostle addresses the saints he writes unto,

(w) *Antiq. Jud. l. 2. c. 2. §. 3.*
fol. 226. 2.

(x) *T. Bab. Zebachim,*
fol. 30. 4. & 51. 2.

(y) *Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 4. & 51. 2.*

unto, and for whom he had a tender affection and regard, and for whose welfare he was concerned, lest they should be stumbled at the length of time, since the promise of the coming of Christ was given, and which these scoffers object; and therefore he would have them know, observe, and consider this one thing, which might be of great use to them to make their minds easy, and keep up their faith and expectation of the coming of Christ.

That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day] Referring either to *Psalms* xc. 4. or to a common saying among the Jews, founded on the same passage, *אלף שנה כיום אחד*, "the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years (x);" suggesting, that though between thirty and forty years had elapsed since the promise was given out, that Christ would come again, and should, even a thousand, or two thousand years more, run off, before the coming of Christ, yet this should be no objection to the accomplishment of the promise: for though such a number of years is very considerable among men, yet not *with God*, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, with whom a thousand years, and even eternity itself, is but as a day, *Isaiah* xliii. 13. Unless this phrase should be thought to refer, as it is by some, to the day of judgment, and be expressive of the duration of that: it is certain, that the Jews interpreted days of millenniums, and reckoned millenniums by days, and used this phrase in confirmation of it. Thus they say (a), "in the time to come, which is in the last days, on the sixth day, which is the sixth millennium, when the Messiah comes, for the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years." So they call the sabbath, or seventh day, the seventh millennium, and interpret (b), "the song for the sabbath-day," *Psalms* xcii. title, for the seventh millennium, for one day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years." For they suppose that the sixth days of the creation were expressive of the six thousand years in which the world will stand; and that the seventh day prefigures the last millennium, in which will be the day of judgment, and the world to come; for "the six days of the creation, they say (c), is a sign or intimation of these things: on the sixth day man was created, and on the seventh his work was finished; so the kings of the nations of the

world (continue) five millenniums, answering to the five days, in which were created the fowls, and the creeping things of the waters, and other things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is a little in the sixth, answerable to the creation of the beasts, and living creatures created at this time in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the house of David is in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his creator, and ruled over them all; and in the end of that millennium, will be the day of judgment, answerable to man, who was judged in the end of it; and the seventh is the sabbath, and it is the beginning of the world to come."

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise] The Syriac version reads in the plural, "his promises," any of his promises; though the words seem rather to regard the particular promise of Christ's coming, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, of which coming there was a promise made, and is often referred to by Christ, and his apostles; see *Mark* ix. 1. *John* xxi. 22. *Heb.* x. 37. and it now being upwards of thirty years since it was given out, some men began to charge God with slackness and dilatoriness; whereas the true reason of the delay of it was, that there might be time for the gathering in of his elect, among them by his angels, or apostles and ministers, sent into the several parts of Judea, that so none of them might perish, but be brought to faith and repentance; and thus as the time of Christ's coming was prolonged more than was thought it would, so when the days of afflictions were come, they were shortened also for these elects sake: or this promise regards the second coming of Christ, to judge the quick and dead at the last day, of which the former was a prelude, preface, and pledge; that Christ would come again, and appear a second time in person, was promised by himself, and often spoken of by his apostles; and many of the primitive christians thought it would be very soon, and which might be occasioned by the hints that were given of his coming in the other sense. Now this being deferred longer than was expected, the scoffers or mockers, take upon them to charge the Lord with slackness in the fulfilment of his promise.

As some men count slackness] As if he had either changed his purpose, or had prolonged it beyond

the

(x) Bereshit Rabba, §. 8. fol. 7. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 19. fol. 100. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 14. fol. 216. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 137. 1. & Nishmat Chayim Orit. 1. v. 5. fol. 12. 1. (a) Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 4. (b) Bar-tumra in M'ish Tamid, c. 7. §. 4. (c) Oseph Misas in Mishna, H'achet Teshuv, c. 9. §. 2.

the appointed time, or was unmindful of his promise, and would never fulfil it; whereas he is in one mind, and none can turn him, nor will he delay the fulfilment of his promise beyond the set time; he has fixed a day for his coming, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and he will keep it: he is not dilatory,

But is long-suffering to us-ward] Not to all the individuals of human nature, for the persons intended by *us* are manifestly distinguished from *some men* in the text, and from scoffers, mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, in the context, *ŷ. 3, 4.* and are expressly called *beloved, ŷ. 1, 8, 14, 17.* and God's long-suffering toward them, is their salvation, *ŷ. 15.* nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them should perish, and that every one of them should come to repentance, since many of them do perish in their sins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the case, if his determining will was otherwise; besides, a society or company of men are designed, to which the apostle himself belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are described, in his epistles, as the elect of God, called out of darkness into marvellous light, and having obtained like precious faith with the apostles; and must be understood either of God's elect among the Jews, for Peter was a Jew, and they were Jews he wrote to; and then the sense is, that the delay of Christ's coming is not owing to any slackness in him, but to his long-suffering to his elect among the Jews, being unwilling that any of that number among them should perish, but that all of them repent of their sins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their conversion is over, when a nation shall be born at once, and they that have pierced him, look on him and mourn, and so all Israel shall be saved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among Jews or Gentiles, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whose long-suffering issues in their conversion and salvation. And upon account of these the Lord stays his coming till their number is compleat in effectual vocation; and for their sakes he is long-suffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, superstition, heresy, profaneness, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he will quickly descend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his chosen ones to himself. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for *you,*" or your sakes; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. A passage somewhat like to this is met with in a book of the Jews (*d*), esteemed by them very ancient.

(d) Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 3.

"God prolongs or defers his anger with men; and one day, which is a thousand years, is *fixed.*" And it is an observation of theirs (*e*), that when God is said to be *long-suffering*, it is not written, ארך אפ, but ארך אפ, intimating, that he is long-suffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the sake of the former: compare with this passage, Rev. vi. 9—11.

Not willing that they should perish] Not any of the *us*, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, whom he has chosen in his Son, and given to him, and for whom he has died, and who are brought to believe in him. These, though they were lost in Adam, did not perish; and though in their own apprehensions, when awakened and convinced, are ready to perish; and though their peace, joy, and comfort may perish for a while, and they may fear a final and total perishing; yet they shall never perish as others do, or be punished with everlasting destruction: and that this is the will of God, appears by his choice of them to salvation; by the provisions of grace for them in an everlasting covenant; by the security of their persons in the hands of Christ; by sending his Son to obtain salvation for them, and his Spirit to apply it to them; and by his keeping them by his power, through faith unto salvation.

But that all should come to repentance] Not legal, but evangelical, without which all must perish; and which all God's elect stand in need of, as well as others, being equally sinners; and which they cannot come to of themselves, and therefore he not only calls them to it, in his word, and by his Spirit and grace, but bestows it upon them; he has exalted Christ at his own right hand, to give it to them; and repentance is a grant from him, a free gift of his grace; and the Spirit is sent down into their hearts to work it in them, to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh; without which, whatever time and space may be given, or means afforded, even the most awful judgments, the greatest mercies, and the most powerful ministry, will be of no avail.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with ferment heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night] That is, the Lord will come in that day,

(e) T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.

day, which he has fixed, according to his promise, than which nothing is more certain; and he will come, as a thief in the night: he will come *in the night*, which may be literally understood; for as his first coming was in the night; see *Luke* ii. 8, 10, 11. so perhaps his second coming may be in the night season; or figuratively, when it will be a time of great darkness; when there will be little faith in the earth, and both the wise and foolish virgins will be slumbering and sleeping; when it will be a season of great security, as it was in the days of Noah, and at the time of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase, *in the night*; and the Alexandrian copy uses the emphatic article, *in the night*: and he will come, *as a thief*, in the dark, indiscernibly; it will not be known, what hour he will come; he will come suddenly, at an unawares, when he is not expected, to the great surprise of men, and especially of the scoffers; when the following awful things will be done.

In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise] Not the third heaven, the seat of angels and glorified saints, and even of God himself; but the starry and airy heavens, which shall pass away, not as to their matter and substance, but as to some of their accidents and qualities, and the present use of them; and that with a great noise, like that of a violent storm, or tempest; though the Ethiopic version renders it, "without a noise;" and which is more agreeable to his coming as a thief, which is not with noise, but in as still a manner as possible; and some learned men observe, that the word signifies swiftly, as well as with a noise; and, accordingly, the Syriac version renders it "suddenly;" and the Arabic version, "presently," immediately; that is, as soon as Christ shall come immediately, at once, from his face shall the earth and heavens flee away, as John in a vision saw, *Rev.* xx. 11.

And the elements shall melt with fervent heat] Not what are commonly called the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, the first principles of all things: the ancient philosophers distinguished between principles and elements; principles, they say (b), are neither generated, nor corrupted; τα τε στοιχεια καλα την απυρωτον φησισιν, "but the elements will be corrupted, or destroyed by the conflagration;" which exactly agrees with what the apostle here says: by the elements, seem to be meant, the host of heaven, being distinguished from the heavens, as the works of the earth are

distinguished from the earth in the next clause; and design the firmament, or expanse, with the sun, moon and stars in it, which will be purged and purified by this liquefaction by fire.

The earth also] Will be purged and purified from every thing that is noxious, hurtful, unnecessary, and disagreeable; though the matter and substance of it will continue.

And the works that are therein, shall be burned up] All the works of nature, wicked men, cattle, trees, &c. and all the works of men, cities, towns, houses, furniture, utensils, instruments of arts of all sorts, will be burnt by a material fire, breaking out of the earth, and descending from heaven, for which the present heavens and earth are reserved: this general conflagration was not only known to the Jews, but to the heathens, to the poets, and Platonist and Stoic philosophers, who frequently (i) speak of it in plain terms. Some are of opinion, that these words refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so the passing away of the heavens may design the removal of their church state and ordinances, *Heb.* xii. 26, 27. and the melting of the elements, the ceasing of the ceremonial law, called the elements of the world, *Gal.* iv. 3, 9. and the burning of the earth, the destruction of the land of Judea, expressed in such a manner in *Deut.* xxix. 23. and chap. xxxii. 22. and particularly of the temple, and the curious works in that, which were all burnt up and destroyed by fire, though Titus endeavoured to prevent it, but could not (k): which sense may be included, inasmuch as there was a promise of Christ's coming to destroy the Jewish nation, and was expected; and which destruction was a prelude of the destruction of the world, and is sometimes expressed in such like language, as that is, but then this must not take place, to the exclusion of the other sense: and whereas this sense makes the words to be taken, partly in a figurative, and partly in a literal way; and seeing the heavens and the earth are in the context only literally taken, the former sense is to be preferred; and to which best agrees the following use to be made of these things.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Seeing

(i) Vid. Diog. Laert. ib. & l. 9. in Vita Heraclit. & Hefeb. de Philosoph. p. 36. Arian Epist. l. 3. c. 13. Phuron de Natura Deorum, p. 39. Ovid. Metamorph. lib. 7. Mith. Felix, p. 37. & Justin. Martyn. Apol. 4. p. 66. (A) Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9, 10. & l. 7. c. 14. 26.

(b) Diog. Laert. l. 7. in Vita Zenonis.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved] By fire; the heaven with all its host, sun, moon, and stars, clouds, meteors, and fowls of the air; the earth, and all that is upon it, whether of nature, or art; and, since nothing is more certain, than such a dissolution of all things,

What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness] Not as the scoffers and profane sinners, who put away this evil day far from them, but as men, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, waiting for their Lord's coming; being continually in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of their religious duties, watching, praying, hearing, reading; living soberly, righteously and godly; guarding against intemperance and worldly mindedness, and every worldly and hurtful lust.

12 Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God] The same with *the day of the Lord*, *ψ. 10.* and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read; and it intends the day of Christ's second coming to judgment, and so is a proof of the deity of Christ; and is called *the day of God*, in distinction from man's day, or human judgment, *1 Cor. iv. 3.* which is often fallacious; whereas the judgment of God is according to truth; and because in that day Christ will appear most clearly to be truly and properly God, by the manifest display of his omniscience, omnipotence, and other glorious perfections of his; and because it will be, as the day of God is, a thousand years; and also the day, in which God will finish all his works, as on the seventh day, the works of creation, on this the works of providence; when all his purposes, promises and threatnings, relating to the final state of all persons and things will be fulfilled, and every work be brought to light, and into judgment, and every thing will stand in a clear light; for the day will declare it, either respecting God, or men; and there will be a display, as of his grace and mercy, to his church and people; for it will be the day of his open espousals to them, and of the gladness of his heart; so of his wrath and anger towards the wicked: for this great and dreadful day of the Lord shall burn like an oven, and destroy the wicked, root and branch: and it will be the day of Christ's glorious appearing, and of his kingdom, in which he will reign, before his ancients, gloriously; and when it is ended, God, Father, Son

and Spirit, will be all in all: now *the coming of this day* saints should be *looking for* by faith; believing that it certainly will come, since the patriarchs, prophets, Christ himself, the angels of heaven, and the apostles of the Lamb, have all declared and asserted the coming of this day; and they should look for it, and love it, as with the strongest affection for it, and most vehement desire of it, since they will then appear with Christ in glory; and they should look out, and keep looking out for it, as what will be quickly; and though it is not, as soon as they desire and expect, yet should still look wisely for it, and with patience and cheerfulness wait for it: yea, they should be *hastening unto it*, or *hastening it*; for though the day is fixed for the coming of Christ, nor can it be altered, as his coming will not be longer, it cannot be sooner, yet it becomes the saints to pray earnestly for it, that it may be quickly, and for the accomplishment of all things that go before it, prepare for it, and lead unto it; such as the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and by putting him in mind of, and pleading with him, his promises concerning these things, and giving him no rest till they are accomplished; there seems to be some reference to the prayers of the Jews for the Messiah's coming, which they desire may be *במהרה, in haste*; which will shew that they are in haste for the coming of this day; and all which things God will hasten, though it will be in his own time: and moreover, saints should be hastening to it by their readiness for it, having their loins girt, and their lights burning, and their lamps trimmed, and they waiting for their Lord's coming, and going forth in acts of faith and love, and in the duties of religion, to meet him, and not slumber and sleep.

Wherein] In which day, as in *ψ. 10.* or by which; by which coming of Christ, or of the day of God,

The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?] At whose coming and presence, and from whose face the heavens and earth shall flee away, just as the earth shook, and the heavens dropped, and Sinai itself moved, when God appeared upon it; see *Rev. xx. 11. Psalm lxxviii. 8.* This is a repetition of what is said in *ψ. 10.* exciting attention to the exhortation given.

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise] Or "promises,"

"promises," as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; namely, those in *Isaiab* lxxv. 17. and chapter lxxvi. 22.

Look for new heavens and a new earth] Not figuratively, the world to come in distinction from the Jewish world or state; a new church-state, the Gospel dispensation, with new ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and every thing new; for these things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but these phrases are to be understood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every passage in the context, *7. 5, 7, 10.* and designs not new heavens and earth for substance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and dissolved, and so purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and so cleared of every thing noxious, needless, and disagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from every thing which the curse brought thereon for man's sin: and such heavens and earth the saints look for by faith and hope, and earnest expectation, and with desire and pleasure; and therefore are not distressed, as they have no reason to be, with the burning of the present heavens and earth, as awful as these things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly devised fables of men, but according to the promises of God recorded in the above passages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Christ, and by the vision of John, *Rev. xx. 1, 5.* The Alexandrian copy reads, "and his promises;" as if it respected other promises the saints looked for besides the new heavens and earth; namely, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happiness.

Wherein dwelleth righteousness] Meaning not the heavenly felicity, called sometimes the crown of righteousness, and the hope of righteousness, to which righteousness gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the apostle is not speaking of the ultimate glory of the saints; nor the righteousness of Christ, as dwelling in the saints, as if the sense was this, we in whom righteousness dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteousness of Christ is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Christ, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by *righteousness* is meant righteous men; such as are so not in and of themselves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteousness done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedi-

VOL. V.

ence of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; see *Jer. xxxiii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 21.* now these, and these only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous persons there, as in the present world, which lies in wickedness, and is full of wicked men; and they will be stocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Christ, when he comes, will bring all his saints with him from heaven, and will raise their bodies, and re-unite them to their souls; and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and whereas upon the coming of Christ, the present heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and so made new and fit for the spirits of just men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ on it for a thousand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Christ's coming, will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead shall not rise till the thousand years are ended, and who being raised, will, together with the devils, make the Gog and Magog army; wherefore none but righteous persons can look for these new heavens and earth, for to these only are they promised, and such only shall dwell in them; so the Targum on *Jer. xxiii. 23.* paraphrases the words, "I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord, I God will *renew* the world for the righteous;" and this renovation of the heavens and the earth they say, will be in the seventh millennium; "in the seventh thousand year, they assert (*m*), there will be found new heavens and a new earth;" which agree with these words of Peter.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things] For the burning of the heavens and the earth, for the coming of Christ, and for the new heavens and new earth,

Be diligent that ye may be found of him] Christ, or *awa*, in him, as in *Phil. iii. 9.* for such as are in Christ will have an undoubted right to the new heavens and the new earth, and will certainly dwell

dwell in them, because they will be found not in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ: or "before him," as the Arabic version renders it; before him the judge of all, at whose tribunal they must stand; but being clothed with his righteousness, and so without spot and blemish, they will not be ashamed before him: or "by him;" Christ first finds his in redemption, and next in effectual vocation, and last of all at his coming, when all the elect will be looked up, gathered in, and presented first to himself, and then to his father, compleat and perfect, not one wanting: and thus to be found in him, and before him, and by him, should be the concern of all that look for the glorious things here spoken of, and particularly that they be found in the following situation and circumstances.

In peace] Interested in that peace Christ has made by the blood of his cross; for such as are reconciled to God by his death, shall be saved by his life, and live with him in the new heavens and new earth, and for ever in the ultimate glory; and in enjoying that peace of conscience which he himself gives, and which flows from his blood, righteousness and atonement; so that the day of his coming by death, or at judgment, will not be terrifying to them, but they will look for these things with great delight and satisfaction: or in peace one with another; for peace-makers and keepers are called the children of God, and so heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; or in happiness and glory, expressed by peace, which is the end of the righteous man, which he enters into at death, and will rest in to all eternity.

Without spot, and blameless] No man is so in himself, sanctification is imperfect, and many are the slips and falls of the saints, though their desire is to be harmless and inoffensive, and to give no just occasion for blame or scandal; but the saints are so in Christ Jesus, being washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, and will be found so by him when he comes again, when he will present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and also before the presence of his Father's glory, as faultless, with exceeding joy; and so will they be fit and meet to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth, and reign with him therein, and be with him to all eternity.

15 And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord] Not his long-suffering towards the wicked, and his forbearance with them, for that is not the means of, nor the way to, nor does it issue in, their salvation, but in their sorer punishment and greater damnation, see *Romans* ii. 4. and chap. ix. 22. but towards the elect, as in *1*. 9. whom he bears much and long with before conversion, whilst in their sins, and in a state of unregeneracy, and waits to be gracious to them, as he is in their vocation, and to make known and apply his great salvation to them; and as with particular persons, so with the whole body of them, till they are all gathered in, and even with the world for their sakes; and particularly the Lord's long-suffering here intends, the deferring of his coming, or his seeming slackness in the performance of his promise: the reason of which

Is salvation] The salvation of all his chosen ones, and in that it issues; he waits, he stays, that none of them might perish, but that they might be all brought to faith and repentance, and so be saved: wherefore the apostle would have the saints consider it in this light, and not imagine and conclude, with the scoffing infidels, that he is slack and dilatory, and will not come, but that his view in it is the salvation of all his people, which by this means is brought about; in confirmation of which, and other things he had delivered, he produces the testimony of the apostle Paul.

Even as our beloved brother Paul also] He calls him a brother, both on account of his being a believer in Christ, one that belonged to the same family with him, and was of the household of faith, born of the same father, and related to the same redeemer the first born among many brethren, and likewise on account of his being a fellow apostle; for though he was not one of the twelve apostles, but his call and mission were later than theirs, yet Peter does not disdain to put him among them, and upon an equal foot with them, nor was he a whit behind the chief of them: he styles him a beloved brother; expressing his affection for him, which the relation between them called for, and which he bore to him, notwithstanding his public opposition to him, and sharp reproof of him, *Gal.* ii. 11. and perhaps loved him the more for it; see *Psalms* cxli. 5. *Prov.* xxvii. 5, 6. and he makes mention of him, and that under these characters, partly to shew their agreement and consent in doctrine; and partly to recommend him to the Jews, to whom he writes, who had, upon report of his doctrine and ministry, entertained an ill, at least a mean opinion of him; as also to set

set us an example to speak well of one another, both as ministers and private believers :

According to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you] Meaning not all his epistles, as being written for the general good of all the saints, as well as for those particular churches or men to whom they were sent; for what Peter speaks of is what was particularly written to them, and is distinguished in the following verse from the rest of Paul's epistles; nor does he intend the epistle of Paul to the Romans, for the long-suffering of God spoken of in that, as in chapters ii. 4. and ix. 22. is his long-suffering to the wicked, which issues in their destruction, and not his long-suffering to his elect, which is salvation, as here; but he seems manifestly to have in view the epistle to the Hebrews, for Peter wrote both his first and second epistles to Jews; wherefore, since none of Paul's epistles but that were written particularly to them, it should seem that that is designed, and serves to confirm his being the author of it; in which he writes to the Hebrews concerning the coming of Christ, and of the deferring of it a little while, and of the need they had of patience to wait for it, *Heb. x. 36, 37.* and in it also are some things difficult to be understood concerning Melchizedek, the old and new covenant, the removing of the Aaronical priesthood, and the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law, &c. things not easily received by that nation; and the whole is written with great wisdom, respecting the person and office of Christ, the nature of his priesthood, and the glory of the Gospel-dispensation; and in a most admirable manner is the whole Mosaic economy laid open and explained: he was indeed a wise master-builder, and whatever he wrote was according to wisdom; not fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this world, nor with enticing words of men's wisdom, but according to the divine wisdom, under the influence of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; for he had not this of himself naturally, nor did he learn it at Gamaliel's feet, but it was what was given to him; it came from above, from God, who gives it liberally; and as he himself always owned it to be a free-grace-gift of God bestowed on him, and that all his light and knowledge were by the revelation of Christ, so Peter ascribes it to the same, that God might have all the glory, and all boasting in man be stopped.

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

As also in his epistles] From whence it appears, that the apostle Paul had, by this time, wrote several of his epistles, if not all of them; and they were all written according to the same wisdom, and under the influence of the same Spirit, as his epistle to the Hebrews.

Speaking in them of these things] Of the same things Peter had been speaking of, of the coming of Christ, as that he should appear a second time to them that look for him, and would come as a thief in the night, and that the fashion, scheme, and form of this world should pass away, and that saints should look and wait for his coming, and love it: something of this kind is said in all his epistles; see *Heb. ix. 28. 1 Thess. v. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 31. and chap. i. 7. Titus ii. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 8.* and also of mockers, scoffers, seducers, and wicked men that would arise in the last days; see *1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1.*

In which are some things hard to be understood] The phrase, *in which*, refers either to the epistles, or the things spoken in them. The Alexandrian manuscript, and three of Robert Stephens's copies read, "αἰς," "in which epistles," but the generality of copies read, "ἐν," "in, or among which things," spoken of in them, concerning the subject here treated of, the coming of Christ; as the time of Christ's coming, which is sometimes represented by the apostle, as if it would be whilst he was living; and the manner of his coming in person with all his saints, and his mighty angels, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, things not easily understood; and the destruction of antichrist at his coming, which will be with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; as also the resurrection of the dead, of the saints that will rise first, and that with spiritual bodies; and likewise the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of living and raised saints together, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and the standing of them before the judgment-seat of Christ, and the account that every one must give to him, *1 Thess. iv. 15—17. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. and chap. ii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 44, 51, 52. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. xiv. 12.*

Which they that are unlearned] Untaught of God, who have never learned of the Father, nor have learned Christ, nor have that anointing which teacheth all things; who, though they may have been in the schools of men, were never in the school of Christ; and though they have been ever learning, yet will never come to the knowledge of the truth; for men may have a large share of human literature, and yet be unlearned men in the sense of the apostle; and very often it is, that

such wrest and pervert the scriptures to the ruin of themselves, and others.

And unstable] Unsettled in their principles, who are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; the root of the matter is not in them; nor are they rooted and built up in Christ, and so are not established in the faith; they are not upon the foundation Christ, nor do they build upon, and abide by the sure word of God, or form their notions according to it, but according to their own carnal reasonings, and fleshly lusts: and so

Wrest] The word of God, distort it from its true sense and meaning, and make it speak that which it never designed; dealing with it as innocent persons are sometimes used, put upon a rack, and tortured, and so forced to speak what is contrary to their knowledge and consciences; and so were the words of the apostle Paul wrested by ill designing men, as about the doctrines of grace and works, so concerning the coming of Christ; see *Rom. iii. 8. 2 Theff. ii. 1, 2.*

As they do also the other scriptures] The writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Acts of the apostles, and the other epistles of the apostles of the New Testament: and which is eventually,

Unto their own destruction] For by so doing they either add unto, or detract from the scriptures, and so bring the curse of God upon them; and they give into doctrines of devils, and into heresies, which are damnable, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, which lingers not, and slumbers not. Now from hence it does not follow, that the scriptures are not to be read by the common people; for not all the parts of scripture, and all things in it, are hard to be understood, there are many things very plain and easy, even every thing respecting eternal salvation; there is milk for babes, as well as meat for strong men: besides, not the scriptures in general, but Paul's epistles, only, are here spoken of, and nor all of them, or any one whole epistle among them, only some things in them, and these not impossible, only difficult to be understood; and which is no reason why they should be laid aside, but rather why they should be read with greater application and diligence, and be followed with fervent prayer, and frequent meditation; and though unlearned and unstable men may wrest them to their perdition, those that are taught of God, though otherwise illiterate, may read them to great profit and advantage.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being

led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before] As that there will be such mockers and scoffers in the last days, and such unlearned and unstable men that will deprave the scriptures, and wrest them in such a miserable manner.

Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked] From the simplicity of the Gospel, along with such wicked men, that wax worse and worse, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which respect the grace of God, or the person and offices of Christ, or particularly his second coming; be upon the watch and guard against them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: lest ye

Fall from your own stedfastness] Which was proper to them, and which, by the grace of God, they had, and retained, both in the faith of Christ, and doctrine of the Gospel; for though the saints can never finally and totally fall into sin, or from the truth, yet they may fall from their stedfastness, both as to the exercise of the grace of faith, and as to their profession of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, hesitating, and doubting in either respect, must be very uncomfortable and dishonourable.

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

But grow in grace] In the gifts of grace, which, under a divine blessing, may be increased by using them: gifts neglected decrease, but stirred up and used, are improved and increase. And though men are to be thankful for their gifts, and be contented with them, yet they may lawfully desire more, and in the use of means seek an increase of them, which may be a means of preserving themselves, and others, from the error of the wicked. Moreover, by *grace* may be meant internal grace. The work of grace is gradual; it is like a grain of mustard-seed, or like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, it is not known how, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; saints are first babes, and from children they grow to young men, and from young men to fathers. There is such a thing as growth in grace, in this sense; every grace, as to its act and exercise, is capable of growing and increasing; faith may grow exceedingly, hope abound, love increase, and patience have its perfect work, and saints may grow more humble, holy, and self-denying: this is indeed God's work, to cause them to grow, and

and it is owing to his grace; yet saints should show a concern for this, and make use of means which God owns and blesses for this purpose, such as prayer, attending on the word, and looking over the promises of God, for an increase of faith; recollecting past experiences, and looking to the death and resurrection of Christ for the encouragement of hope, and to the love of God and Christ, for the stirring up of love to both, and to the saints; considering the sufferings of Christ, the desert of sin, and the glories of another world, to promote patience, and self-denial, and the pattern of Christ, to excite to humility; though *grace* may also intend the Gospel, the knowledge of which is imperfect, and may be increased in the use of means, and which is a special preservative against error, a growth in which saints should be concerned for.

And in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ] Of his person, office, and grace, than which nothing is more valuable, and is to

be preferred to every thing; it is the principal thing in grace, and is the beginning and pledge of eternal life, and will issue in it; for an increase of which, and a growth in it, the word and ordinances are designed; and nothing can be a greater security against error than an experimental growing knowledge of Christ. The Syriac version adds, "and of God the Father;" and so some copies read.

To him be glory both now and for ever] Of "to the day of eternity;" that is, to Christ, who is truly God, or otherwise such a doxology would not belong to him, be ascribed the glory of Deity, of all divine perfections; the glory of all his offices and work as mediator; the glory of man's salvation; and the glory of all that grace, and the growth of it, together with the knowledge of himself, which saints have from him; and that both in this world, and that which is to come.

Amen] So be it.

The

The First Epistle General of J O H N.

THE author of this epistle was *John*, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved: he was the youngest of the apostles, and survived them all. He does not indeed put his name to this epistle, as the apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude do to theirs; and it is easy to observe, that when this disciple, in his writings, had any occasion to speak of himself, it was usually by such a circumlocution, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, or the other disciple, studiously concealing his name: so that his not putting his name to this epistle, need not create any scruple about his being the author of it, which every where breathes the temper and spirit of this great apostle; and whoever compares this epistle, and the Gospel written by him, together, will easily conclude it to be his, both from the style and subject-matter of it: besides, as Eusebius asserts (*a*), this epistle was generally received without scruple, both by ancient and modern writers. It is called *general*, because it was not written and sent to any particular church, or person, and not because it was for the general use of the churches, for so are all the particular epistles; but because it was written to the Christians in general, or to the believing Jews in general, wherever they were; for that it was written to the Jews, seems evident from chap. ii. 2. It was called, by some of the ancients, the epistle of John to the Parthians (*b*); by whom must be meant, not the natives of Parthia, but the Jews professing to believe in Christ, who dwelt in that empire. We read of Parthian Jews at the feast of Pentecost, *Acts* ii. 9. who at that time might be converted, and upon their return to their own country, lay the foundation of a Gospel-church-state there. Dr Lightfoot (*c*) conjectures from a passage in 3 *John* 9. that this epistle was written to the Corinthians; but there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for it. As for the time when, and place where, this epistle was written, it is not easy to say: some think it was written at Patmos, whither the apostle was banished in the reign of Domitian, and where he wrote the book of the Revelation; see *Rev.* i. 9. and here some say he wrote his Gospel, and this epistle, and that a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and which he calls the last time or hour; and that his design in writing it, was to exhort the believing Jews, either in Parthia, or scattered about in other countries, to brotherly love, and to warn them against false Christs and false prophets, which were now gone forth into the world to deceive men; see chapters ii. 18. and iv. 1. Others think that it was written by him when a very old man, after his return from his exile to Ephesus, where he resided during his life, and where he died and was buried. It is called his first epistle general, not that it is the first general epistle, for the other two are written to particular persons, but is the first he wrote, and which is general: the occasion, and manifest design of it is to promote brotherly love, which he enforces upon the best principles, and with the strongest arguments, taken from the love of God and Christ, from the commandment of Christ, and its being an evidence of regeneration, and the truth and glory of a profession of religion: and also to oppose and stop the growth of licentious principles and practices, and heretical doctrines. The licentious principles and practices he condemns are these, that believers had no sin in them, or need not be concerned about it, nor about their outward conversation, so be they had but knowledge; and these men boasted of their communion with God, notwithstanding their impieties; and which were the sentiments and practices of the Nicolaitans, Gnostics, and Carpocratians. The heresies he sets himself against, and refutes, are such as regard the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person and office of Christ. There were some who denied a distinction of persons in the Trinity, and asserted there was but one person; that the Father was not distinct from the Son, nor the Son from the Father; and by confounding both, tacitly denied there was either, as Simon Magus, and his followers; regard is had to these in chap. ii. 22. and v. 7. and others, as the unbelieving Jews, denied, that Jesus was the Messiah, or that

Christ

(*a*) *Eccles. Hist.* l. 3. c. 24.(*b*) *Augustin, apud Grotium.*(*c*) *Hor. Hebr. in 1 Cor. l. 14.*

Christ was come in the flesh; these are taken notice of in chapters ii. 22. and iv. 2, 3. and v. 1. Others, that professed to believe in Jesus Christ, denied his proper Deity, and asserted he was a mere man, and did not exist before he took flesh of the virgin, as Ebion and Cerinthus; these are opposed in chapters i. 1, 2. and iii. 16. and v. 20. And others denied his real humanity, and affirmed, that he was a mere phantom; that he only had the appearance of a man, and assumed human nature, and suffered, and died, and rose again in shew only, and not in reality; of which sort were the followers of Saturninus and Basilides, and which are confuted in chapter i. 1—3. This epistle is, by Clemens Alexandrius (*d*), called his “greater or larger epistle,” it being so in comparison of the other two that follow.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter the apostle gives a summary of the Gospel, and the evidence of it, and from thence presses to a holy life and conversation. The sum of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, who is described both as God and man; his deity is expressed by being that which was from the beginning, the word of life, life, and eternal life; his humanity by being the life-manifested in the flesh, of which the apostles had full evidence by the several senses of seeing, hearing, and handling, and so were capable of bearing witness to the truth thereof, *ſ*. 1, 2. And the ends had in view in giving this summary, evidence, and testimony, were, that the saints wrote unto might have fellowship with the apostles, whose fellowship was with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and that their joy on hearing these things might be full, *ſ*. 3, 4. And the amount of the message declared by them was, that God is light, or a pure and holy being, and that there is no darkness of sin, or unholiness in him; wherefore all such that pretend to communion with him, and live a sinful course of life, are liars; only such have fellowship with him, and with his Son, whose blood cleanses them from all sin, who live holy lives and conversations, *ſ*. 5—7. not that it is to be expected that men should be clear of the being of sin in this life, only that they should, as often as they sin, be humbled for it, and confess it before God, who will forgive them, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness; but as for those who affirm they have no sin in them, or any done by them, they are self-deceivers, the truth of grace is not in them, nor the word of God, and they make him a liar, *ſ*. 8—10.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked

upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

That which was from the beginning] By which is meant not the Gospel, as if the apostle's design was to assert the antiquity of that, and clear it from the charge of novelty; for though that is called the Word, and the Word of life, and is the Spirit which gives life, and is the means of quickening dead sinners, and brings the report of eternal life and salvation by Christ, yet the seeing of it with bodily eyes, and handling it with corporeal hands, do not agree with that; but Jesus Christ is here intended, who in his divine nature was, really existed as a divine person, as the everlasting Jehovah, the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and is to come, and existed *from the beginning*; not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel by John only, for he was before the Gospel was preached, being the first preacher of it himself, and before John was; yea, before the prophets, before Abraham, and before Adam, and before all creatures, from the beginning of time, and of the creation of the world, being the maker of all things, even from everlasting; for otherwise he could not have been set up in an office-capacity so early, or God's elect be chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and they have grace and blessings given them in him before the world began, or an everlasting covenant be made with him; see *John* i. 1.

Which we have heard] This, with what follows, proves him to be truly and really man; for when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, the apostles heard, and saw, and handled him; they not only heard a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God, but they often heard him speak himself, both in private conversation with them, and in his public ministry; they heard his many excellent discourses on the mount, and elsewhere, and those that were particularly delivered to them a little before his death;

death; and blessed were they on this account, *Matt. xiii. 16, 17.*

Which we have seen with our eyes] With the eyes of the body, with their own, and not another's; and they saw him in human nature, and the common actions of life he did, as eating, drinking, walking, &c. and his many miracles; they saw him raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, restore sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear; and they saw him transfigured on the mount. John was one that was present at that time, and saw his glory, as he also was when he hung upon the cross, and saw him bleeding, gasping, and dying there; they saw him after his resurrection from the dead, he shewed himself to them alive, and was seen of them forty days; they saw him go up to heaven, and a cloud receiving him out of their sight.

Which we have looked upon] Wisely and intently, once and again, and a thousand times, and with the utmost pleasure and delight; and knew him perfectly well, and were able to describe exactly his person, stature, features, and the lineaments of his body.

And our hands have handled, of the Word of life] As Peter did when Jesus caught him by the hand on the water, when he was just ready to sink; and as this apostle did, when he leaned on his bosom; and as Thomas did, even after his resurrection, when he thrust his hand into his side; and as all the apostles were called upon to see and handle him, that it was he himself, and not a Spirit, which has not flesh and bones as he had. Now as this is said of Christ, *the Word of life*, who is so called, because he has life in himself, as God, as the mediator, and as man, and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, it must be understood as he, the Word, is made manifest in the flesh; for he, as the Word, or as a divine person, or as considered in his divine nature, is not to be seen nor handled: this therefore is spoken of the Word, or of the person of Christ, God-man, with respect to his human nature, as united to the Logos, or Word of God; and so is a proof of the truth and reality of his human nature, by several of the senses.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

(*For the life was manifested]* That is, the Word of life, who is life itself, the fountain of life, having it, as God, in and of himself, without

derivation from, and independent of another, originally and eternally, and who is the cause, author, and giver of life in every sense to others; this living God, who from all eternity, was invisible, was in the fulness of time manifested in human nature; see *John i. 14. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John iii. 8.*

And we have seen it] As before with the eyes of their bodies.

And bear witness] For they were both eye and ear-witnesses of the word, and of the truth of his incarnation, and bore a faithful record both to his proper deity, and real humanity.

And shew unto you that eternal life] Jesus Christ, the true God, and eternal life, as in chap. v. 20. so called, because he has everlasting life in himself; as he is the living God, and because he has eternal life for all his people; not only the purpose and promise of it are in him, but the thing itself; and it is in his power and gift to bestow it on all the Father hath given to him, and to them he does give it. The beginning of it lies in the knowledge of him, and the consummation of it will be in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him.

Which was with the Father] That is, which life, eternal life, and Word of life, was from the beginning, or from all eternity with God the Father; which phrase is expressive of the eternal existence of Christ, as the Word and Son of God, with his Father, his relation to him, his oneness in nature, and equality with him, and his personal distinction from him; see *John i. 1.*

And was manifested unto us)] In human nature, as before observed, and that to the apostles, as he was not to the patriarchs and prophets; for though they saw him in promise, in prophecy, in type, and figure, and he sometimes appeared in an human form, for a short time, to them, yet they did not see him incarnate, in actual union with human nature; nor had they him dwelling among them, and conversing with them, as the apostles had; this was an happiness peculiar to them.

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

That which we have seen and heard] This is repeated, both to confirm and illustrate what had been before said, and to carry on the discourse to what follows.

Declare

Declare we unto you] In the ministry of the word; the person and offices of Christ being the sum and substance of the Gospel-ministration, that declares him to be the true God, and eternal life, God over all, blessed for ever; and truly man, made of a woman, and made under the law; and to be the only mediator between God and man, to be prophet, priest, and king, and to be the alone saviour and redeemer: this declares the greatness and excellency of his salvation, what an able, proper, and suitable saviour he is; and what precious promises, and spiritual blessings are in him, even all grace, and eternal glory. And this declaration of him is made in the Gospel, for the following ends and purposes.

That ye also may have fellowship with us] In hearing, seeing, and handling of Christ in a spiritual sense; and by enjoying the same privileges in God's house and family, the same ordinances and spiritual provisions; joining and partaking with them in all the immunities and advantages of a Gospel-church-state here; and by being with them to all eternity hereafter.

And truly our fellowship is with the Father] The Father of Christ, the covenant God and Father of his people; and which they have with him, when under the influence and witnessings of the Spirit of adoption, and can in the strength of faith call him their Father, draw nigh to him through Christ as such, and are indulged with his presence, and the discoveries of his love.

And with his Son Jesus Christ] Being in union to him, they become partakers of him, and of his blessings; they receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace; they are admitted to an intimacy and familiarity with him; they are had into his chambers of secret retirement; they are brought into his banquetting house, where his banner over them is love, and where he sups with them, and they with him; and into this fellowship are they called by the grace of God, through the Gospel; as also they have fellowship with the blessed Spirit, though not here mentioned; see 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

4 And these things write we unto you, that our joy may be full.

And these things write we unto you] Concerning the deity and eternity of Christ, the Word; and concerning the truth of his humanity, and the manifestation of him in the flesh; and concerning that eternal life and salvation which is declared in the Gospel to be in him; and concerning the saints fellowship one with another, and with God the Father, and with Jesus Christ.

That our joy may be full] Meaning either their spiritual joy in this life, which has Christ for its

object, and is increased by the consideration of his proper deity, his incarnation and mediation; by a view of free justification, by his righteousness and atonement by his blood; by a sight of his glorious person by faith, and by intimate communion with him, and a discovery of his love, which passeth knowledge: and which joy, when it is large, and very great, may, in a comparative sense, be said to be full, though not absolutely so, and being as much as can well be enjoyed in this state; and nothing can more contribute to it than a declaration of the above things in the Gospel, and an experimental acquaintance with them, and enjoyment of them: or else it may intend the joy of the saints in the world to come, in the presence of Christ, where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; and so may express the ultimate glory and happiness of God's people, which is the chief end, as of his purposes, promises, and covenant, so of the Gospel, and the declaration of it. The Syriac version renders it, "that our joy, which is in you, may be full;" for it is the joy of the ministers of the word, when the saints are established in the faith of Christ's person and offices, and have communion with him, with which view they declare him, and bear record of him. Some copies read, *our joy*.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

This then is the message] Of God by his Son the Word, or from Christ by his apostles. The Syriac version renders it, "this is the Gospel;" which is good news from a far country, a message sent from the King of kings to sinful men: or "this is the annunciation," or declaration; that is, the thing declared, or shewed. Some render it, "this is the promise," that whereas God is light, such who walk in the light shall have communion with him, and others shall not.

Which we have heard of him] Of Christ, who has declared him, that he is light without any mixture of darkness; that he is a pure Spirit, and must be worshipped in a spiritual way; and that only spiritual worshippers are such as he seeks, and admits to communion with him. Moreover, they might hear and learn this of Christ, by his telling them that he himself was light, who is the image of the invisible God, inasmuch, that he that has seen the Son, has seen the Father also. Wherefore, if the one is light, the other must be likewise; nor is there any coming to the Father, and enjoying communion with him, but through Christ; all which our Lord told his disciples.

U u

The

The Ethiopic version reads, "which ye have heard," very wrongly; for the words regard the apostles, who made a faithful declaration of the message they heard, and had from Christ, which is as follows.

And declare unto you, that God is light] That is, God the Father, as distinguished from him, Christ, of whom they had heard this message, and from Jesus Christ his Son, y. 7. what is declared of him, agreeable to the report of Christ, is, that he is light; that is, as light is opposed to the darkness of sin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works, and of such pure eyes as not to behold iniquity; and so perfectly holy, that angels cover their faces before him, when they speak of his holiness: and as light is opposed to the darkness of ignorance, he is wise and knowing; he knows himself, his own nature, being, and perfections, his Son and Spirit, and their distinct modes of subsisting; he sees clearly all things in himself, all things he could do, or has determined shall be done; he has perfect knowledge of all creatures and things, and the darkness and the light are alike unto him, nor can the former hide from him: he is knowable, and to be discerned; he is clothed with light, and dwells in it; he may be known by the works of creation and providence; even the invisible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead may be clearly seen and understood by them, and especially in his word, and most clearly in his Son; it is owing to the darkness of men, and not to any in and about God, who is light, that he is so little known as he is: and like the light he illuminates others; he is the Father of lights, the author and giver of all light; of the light of reason to men in general; and of grace here, and glory hereafter to his own people, which are both signified by light; in whose light they see light; and he refreshes and delights their souls, with the light of his countenance now, and with his glorious presence in the other world.

And in him is no darkness at all] No darkness of sin; nothing is more contrary to him, or more distant from him; nor any darkness of error and ignorance; what is unknown to men, as the times and seasons; what angels were ignorant of, and even Christ, as man, as the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, were known to the Father; in him is no ignorance of any thing whatever; nor is there any variableness or shadow of turning in him, as there is in the luminous body of the sun; but God is always the same pure and holy, wise and knowing being. It is usual, with the Cabalistic Jews (e), to call the supreme being, *the light*; the most simple light, hidden light,

and infinite light, with respect to his nature, glory, and majesty, and with regard also to his grace and mercy, justice and judgment; though, as R. Sangari says (f), this is to be understood of him figuratively.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

If we say that we have fellowship with him] The Alexandrian copy reads, "for if we say;" that is, if any profess to be partakers of the divine nature, to be like unto God, and to have communion with him, to have the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love.

And walk in darkness] In the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, or are in a state of unregeneracy, and blindness; whose understandings are darkened, and they know not God in Christ, nor have any true fight and sense of themselves, their sin and danger; and are ignorant of Christ, and his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and are strangers to the Spirit of God, and the work of his grace; and are unacquainted with the truths of the Gospel; and not only so, but go on in darkness more and more; prefer it to the light, love it, and the works of it; have fellowship with them, and choose them; take pleasure in the ways of sin and wickedness, and continue, and walk on in them; if such persons pretend to fellowship with God, they are liars.

We lie] It cannot be, it is a contradiction, the thing is impossible and impracticable; what communion hath light with darkness? or what fellowship can the throne of iniquity, or those in whom sin reigns, have with God? for God is light, and were they partakers of him, or like unto him, or had communion with him, they would consequently be in the light, and not in darkness, and much less walk in it: wherefore they are liars.

And do not the truth] They do not say the truth, nor act according to it; they do not act uprightly, or sincerely, but are hypocrites, and pretend to that which they have not; and if they did the truth, they would come to the light, and not walk in darkness; see John iii. 21.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

But if we walk in the light] Are persons enlightened by the Spirit of God, so as to have a true

(e) Lex. Cabalistic, p. 63, 64.

(f) See her Cosmi, par. 2. §. 2 fol. 62. 2.

true sight and sense of sin, to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and are children of the light, and are going on and increasing in spiritual light and knowledge; walk on in Christ, the light, by faith, and in the light and truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it, and as children of light; and as such who are called out of darkness into marvellous light.

As he is in the light] According to the light which he has given, who is light itself, is in it, and dwells in it. This *as* denotes not equality, but likeness: when this is the case, then it is a clear point, that

We have fellowship one with another] Not with the saints, with the apostles, and other christians, but with God: "we have mutual communion," as the Arabic version renders it; God with us, and we with him. Some copies read, "with him," as in *y*. 6. and such a reading the sense requires; and agreeable to this the Ethiopic version renders it, "and we are partakers among ourselves with him;" that is, we all jointly and mutually appear to be like him, and partake of his nature, and have communion with him; and not only so, but with his Son Jesus Christ, as appears from our having a share in the cleansing efficacy of his blood.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin] There is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can remove but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, nor moral duties, nor evangelical performances, or submission to Gospel-ordinances, and particularly baptism, which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh; nor even the graces of the Spirit, no, not faith, no otherwise than as it has to do with this blood; for this cleansing is not to be understood of sanctification, for that more properly belongs to the Spirit of God, and besides, does not cleanse from all sin; for notwithstanding this, sin is in the saints: but either of the atonement of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ, and so of a compleat justification from it by his blood, which is put for both his active and passive obedience, the one being finished in the other; or rather of the pardon of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and the application of that blood to the conscience, which purges it from dead works, and which has a continued virtue in it for that purpose. Christ's blood, being applied by the Spirit of God, has been always cleansing from sin; it had this virtue in it, and was of this use, even before it was actually shed, to the Old Testament saints; whence Christ is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and it

has the same efficacy now, as when first shed, and will have to the end of the world; and being sprinkled upon the conscience, by the Spirit of God, it takes away the sins of believers, and cleanses from them; as fast as the corruption of nature rises, or sins appear; and removes them out of their sight, and speaks peace to their souls; and which is owing, as to the dignity of Christ's person, and the value of his sacrifice, so to his continual intercession, advocacy, and mediation; and which reaches to all sin, original and actual, secret and open sins; sins of heart, thought, lip, and life; sins of omission and commission, greater or lesser sins, committed against light and knowledge, grace and mercy, Law and Gospel, all but the sin against the holy Ghost; and in this Christ was the antitype of the scape-goat, of which the Jews say (*g*), that "it atoned for all the transgressions of the law, whether small or great, sins of presumption, or of ignorance, known, or not known, which were against an affirmative or negative command, which deserved cutting off, (by the hand of God) or death by the Sanhedrim." The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "from all our sins;" and this must be ascribed to the greatness of his person, as the Son of God; wherefore the emphasis lies on these words, *his Son*; the Son of God, who is equal with God, and is truly and properly God; as it must be the blood of man that must, according to the law, be shed, to atone for, and expiate sin, and cleanse from it, and that of an innocent man, who is holy, harmless, and without sin; so it must not be the blood of a mere man, though ever so holy, but the blood of one that is God, as well as man; see *Acts* xx. 28. The divine nature of the Son of God, being in union with the human nature, put virtue into his blood to produce such an effect, which still continues, and will, as long as there is any occasion for it.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we say that we have no sin] Notwithstanding believers are cleansed from their sins by the blood of Christ, yet they are not without sin; no man is without sin: this is not only true of all men, as they come into the world, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and of all that are in a state of unregeneracy, and of God's elect, while in such a state, but even of all regenerated and sanctified persons in this life; as appears by the ingenuous confessions of sin made by the saints in all ages; by their complaints concerning it, and groans

groans under it; by the continual war in them between flesh and spirit; and by their prayers for the discoveries of pardoning grace, and for the fresh application of Christ's blood for cleansing; by their remissness in the discharge of duty, and by their frequent slips and falls, and often backslidings: and though their sins are all pardoned, and they are justified from all things by the righteousness of Christ, yet they are not without sin; though they are freed from the guilt of sin, and are under no obligation to punishment on account of it, yet not from the being of it; their sins were indeed transferred from them to Christ, and he has bore them, and took them and put them away, and they are redeemed from them, and are acquitted, discharged, and pardoned, so that sin is not imputed to them, and God sees no iniquity in them in the article of justification; and also, their iniquities are caused to pass from them, as to the guilt of them, and are taken out of their sight, and they have no more conscience of them, having their hearts sprinkled and purged by the blood of Jesus, and are clear of all condemnation, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, or the second death, by reason of them; yet pardon of sin, and justification from it, though they take away the guilt of sin, and free from obligation to punishment, yet they do not take out the being of sin, or cause it to cease to act, or do not make sins, cease to be sins, or change the nature of actions, of sinful ones, to make them harmless, innocent, or indifferent; the sins of believers are equally sins with other persons, are of the same kind and nature, and equally transgressions of the law, and many of them are attended with more aggravating circumstances, and are taken notice of by God, and resented by him, and for which he chastises his people in love: now though a believer may say, that he has not this or that particular sin, or is not guilty of this or that sin, for he has the seeds of all sin in him, yet he cannot say he has no sin; and though he may truly say he shall have no sin, for in the other state the being and principle of sin will be removed, and the saints will be perfectly holy in themselves, yet he cannot, in this present life, say that he is without it: if any of us who profess to be cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, should affirm this,

We deceive ourselves] Such persons must be ignorant of themselves, and put a cheat upon themselves, thinking themselves to be something when they are nothing; flattering themselves what pure and holy creatures they are, when there is a fountain of sin and wickedness in them; these are self-deceptions, sad delusions and gross impositions upon themselves.

And the truth is not in us] It is a plain case the truth of grace is not in such persons; for if there was a real work of God upon their souls, they would know and discern the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of their nature, and the imperfection of their obedience; nor is the word of truth in them, for if that had an entrance into them, and worked effectually in them, they would in the light of it discover much sin and iniquity in them; and indeed there is no principle of truth, no veracity in them; there is no sincerity nor ingenuity in them; they do not speak honestly and uprightly, but contrary to the dictates of their own conscience.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we confess our sins] Not to one another; for though it is our duty to confess our faults to our fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians which are committed against them, yet are under no obligation to confess such as are more immediately against God, and which lie between him and ourselves; or at least it is sufficient to confess and acknowledge in general what sinful creatures we are, without entering into particulars; for confession of sin is to be made to God, against whom it is committed, and who only can pardon: and a man that truly confesses his sin is one that the Spirit of God has convinced of it, and has shewn him its exceeding sinfulness, and filled him with a godly sorrow for it, and given him repentance unto salvation, that needeth not to be repented of; and who under such a sight and sense of sin, and concern for it, comes and acknowledges it before the Lord, humbly imploring, for Christ's sake, his pardoning grace and mercy; and such obtain it.

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins] Forgiveness of sin here intends not the act of forgiveness, as in God, proceeding upon the bloodshed and sacrifice of Christ, which is done at once, and includes all sin, past, present, and to come; but an application of pardoning grace to a poor sensible sinner, humbled under a sense of sin, and confessing it before the Lord; and confession of sin is not the cause or condition of pardon, nor of the manifestation of it, but is descriptive of the person, and points him out, to whom God will and does make known his forgiving love; for to whomsoever he grants repentance, he gives the remission of sin; in doing of which he is *faithful*, to his word of promise; such as in *Prov. xxviii. 13. Isaiah lv. 7. and just*; in being *true*, as the Arabic

Arabic version adds, "to his word;" and shewing proper regard to the blood and sacrifice of his Son; for his blood being shed, and hereby satisfaction being made to the law and justice of God, it is a righteous thing in him to justify from sin, and forgive the sinner for whom Christ has shed his blood, and not impute it to him, or punish him for it; though the word here used may answer to the Hebrew word *רחם*, which sometimes carries in it the notion and idea of mercy and beneficence; hence mercy to the poor is sometimes expressed by righteousness; and the righteous acts of God intend his mercies and benefits unto men; see *Dan. iv. 27. 1 Sam. xii. 7.* and so forgiveness of sin springs from the tender mercies of our God, and is both an act of justice and of mercy; of justice, with respect to the blood of Christ, and of pure grace and mercy to the pardoned sinner: the following clause,

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness] Is but the same thing expressed in different words; for all unrighteousness is sin, and to cleanse from sin is to remove the guilt of it, by an application of the blood of Christ for pardon. The antecedent to the relative *he* in the text, is either God, who is light, and with whom the saints have fellowship; or his son Jesus Christ, who is the nearest antecedent, and who being truly God, has a power to forgive sin.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

If we say that we have not sinned] Have never sinned, in time past as well as now; deny original sin, and that men are born in sin, but affirm they come into the world pure and holy; and assert that concupiscence is not sin; and so not regarding internal lusts and desires as sinful, only what is external, fancy they have so lived as to have been without sin: but if any of us give out such an assertion,

We make him a liar] That is God, who in his word declares that the wicked are estranged from the womb; and go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies; that his own people are transgressors from the womb; that all have sinned and come short of his glory; and that there is none that does good, no not one, but all are under sin, under the power and guilt of it, and become filthy by it, and so obnoxious to the wrath of God.

And his word is not in us] Either Christ the Word of God, or rather the word of God which declares these things; no regard is had unto it; it "is not with us," as the Syriac and Ethiopic

versions render it; it is not used and attended to as the rule and standard of truth, but is cast away and despised; at least it has no place in the hearts of such, nor does it work effectually; for was this the case, they would have other notions of themselves than that of sinless creatures. The apostle has regard either to the Gnostics, a set of heretics of this age, who fancied themselves pure, spiritual, and perfect, even in the midst of all their impurities, and notwithstanding their vicious lives; or to Judaizing christians, and it may be to the Jews themselves, who entertained such sort of notions as these of being perfect and without sin (b).

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apostle comforts the saints under a sense of sin; urges them to an observance of the commandments of God in imitation of Christ, particularly to the new commandment of brotherly love, and gives his reasons for it; dehorts them from the love of the world, and the things of it; cautions them against false teachers and antichrists, and exhorts them to abide in Christ, and persevere in the faith of him. He first declares that the end of his writing was to prevent their sinning; but supposing any should fall into sin through infirmity, he comforts them with the consideration of the advocacy of Christ, and of his being the propitiation for the sins both of Jews and Gentiles, *1. 2.* and whereas some persons might boast of their knowledge of Christ, and neglect his commands, he observes, that the keeping of them is the best evidence of true knowledge, and of the sincerity of their love to God, and of their being in Christ; and that such who shew no regard to them are liars, and the truth is not in them; and such that profess to be in Christ and abide in him, ought to walk as they have him for an example, *3-6.* and instances in a particular commandment, to love one another, which on different accounts is called an old and a new commandment, and which has been verified both in Christ and in his people; for which a reason is given in the latter, the darkness being past, and the true light shining, *7, 8.* upon which some propositions are founded, as that he that professes to be in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness to this very moment; and that he that loves his brother is evidently in the light, nor will he easily give or take offence; and that he that hates his brother is not only in darkness, but

(b) Vid. T. Bab. Temura, fol. 45. 2. & Bava Kama, fol. 80. 2. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 24. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 77. 4.

but walks in it, being blinded by it, and so knows not whither he is going, *ſ. 9—11.* and this commandment of love the apoſtle writes to the ſaints, as diſtinguiſhed into the ſeveral claſſes of fathers, young men and children; and urges it on them from the conſideration of the bleſſings of grace peculiar to them; as ancient knowledge to fathers, ſtrength and victory to young men, knowledge of the father, and remiſſion of ſins to children, *ſ. 12—14.* and then he diſſuades from the love of worldly things, ſeeing the love of them is not conſiſtent with the love of God; and ſeeing the things that are in it are vain and ſinful, and are not of God, but of the world; and ſince the world and its luſts paſs away, when he that does the will of God abides for ever, *ſ. 15—17.* he next obſerves unto them, that there were many antichriſts in the world; which was an evidence of its being the laſt time; and theſe he deſcribes as ſchiſmatics and apoſtates from the chriſtian churches, *ſ. 18, 19.* but as for the ſaints he writes to, they were of another character, they were truly chriſtians, having an anointing from the holy one; by which they knew all things; nor did the apoſtle write to them as ignorant, but as knowing perſons, and able to diſtinguiſh between truth and error, *ſ. 20, 21.* and then he goes on with his deſcription of anti-chriſtian liars, ſhewing that they were ſuch who denied Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, and the relation that is between the Father and the Son, *ſ. 22, 23.* and cloſes the chapter with an exhortation to perſeverance in the doctrine of Chriſt; ſince it was what they had heard from the beginning, and ſince by ſo doing they would continue in the Father and in the Son, and beſides had the promiſe of eternal life, *ſ. 24, 25.* and indeed this was the main thing in view in writing to them concerning ſeducers, to preſerve them from them, though indeed this was in a great meaſure needleſs, ſince the anointing they had received abode in them; and taught them all things, and according as they regarded its teaching they would abide in Chriſt, *ſ. 26, 27.* to which he exhorts them from the conſideration of that boldneſs and confidence it would give them at his appearance, who they muſt know is righteous, and ſo that every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of him, *ſ. 28, 29.*

MY little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous:

My little children] The apoſtle may addreſs the ſaints under this character, on account of their regeneration by the Spirit and grace of God, in which they were as new-born babes; and on account of his being the inſtrument of their conversion, and ſo was their ſpiritual father, and therefore calls them his own children; and he might the rather uſe ſuch a way of ſpeaking, becauſe of his advanced age, being now in his old age, and John the elder in age as well as in office; as well as to ſhew his paternal affection for them, and care of them, and that what he had wrote, or ſhould write, was not from any diſreſpect, but from pure love to them; and it might ſerve to put them in mind of their weakneſs in faith, in knowledge, and ſpiritual ſtrength, that they might not entertain high notions of themſelves, as if they were perfect and without infirmities; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that this is one of Chriſt's expreſſions, *John xiii. 33.* from whoſe lips the apoſtle took it, whoſe words and phraſes he greatly delighted in, as he ſeems to do in this, by his frequent uſe of it; ſee *ſ. 18, 28.* and chapters *iii. 7, 18.* and *iv. 4.* and *v. 21.*

Theſe things write I unto you] Concerning the purity and holineſs of God, who is light itſelf; concerning fellowſhip with him, which no one that lives in ſin can have; concerning pardon and cleaning from ſin by the blood of Chriſt, and concerning ſin being in them, and they not without it. The Ethiopic verſion reads, “we write,” as in chapter *i. 4.*

That ye ſin not] Not that he thought they could be entirely without it, either without the being of it, or the commiſſion of it, in thought, word, or deed, for this would be to ſuppoſe that which is contrary to his own words, in chapter *i. 8, 10.* but he ſuggeſts that the end of his writing on theſe ſubjects was, that they might not live in ſin, and indulge themſelves in a vicious courſe of living, give up themſelves to it, and walk in it, and work it with all greedineſs: and nothing could be more ſuitably adapted to ſuch an end than the conſideration of the holineſs of God, who calls by his grace; and of the neceſſity of light and grace and holineſs in men to communion with him; and of the pardoning grace of God and cleaning blood of Chriſt, which when ſavingly applied, ſets men againſt ſin, and makes them zealous of good works; and of the indwelling of ſin in the ſaints, which puts them upon their guard againſt it.

And if any man ſin] As every man does, even every one that is in the light, and walks in it, and has fellowſhip with God; every one that believes in Chriſt, and is juſtified through his righteouſneſs,

ousness, and pardoned by his blood; every one of the little children; for the apostle is not speaking of mankind in general who sin, for Christ is not an advocate for all that sin, but of these in particular; hence the Arabic version renders it, "if any of you sin;" and this, with the following, he says not to encourage in sin, but to comfort under a sense of it.

We have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Christ in an advocate, nor for just or righteous persons, for as he came not to call these to repentance, nor to die for them, so such have no need of an advocate, nor is he one for them; but as he came to call sinners, and to save them, and died for them, the just for the unjust, so he is an advocate, and makes intercession for transgressors; and not for all men, though they have all sinned; not for the world, or those so called in distinction from the persons given him by his Father, for these he prays not; but for all the elect, and whatsoever charges are brought against them he answers to them, and for them; and for all that believe in him, be they weak or strong, even for the apostles as well as others; for they were not without sin, were men of like passions as others, and carried about with them a body of sin, and had their daily infirmities, and so needed an advocate as others; and hence John says, *we have an advocate*, &c. but then Christ is not an advocate for sin, though for sinners; he does not vindicate the commission of sin, or plead for the performance of it; he is no patron of iniquity; nor does he deny that his clients have sinned, or affirm that their actions are not sins; he allows in court all their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances; nor does he go about to excuse or extenuate them; but he is an advocate for the non-imputation of them, and for the application of pardon to them: he pleads in their favour, that these sins have been laid upon him, and he has bore them; that his blood has been shed for the remission of them, and that he has made full satisfaction for them; and therefore in justice they ought not to be laid to their charge; but that the forgiveness of them should be applied unto them, for the relief and comfort of their burdened and distressed consciences: and for this he is an advocate for his poor sinning people *with the Father*; who being the first person, and the Son the advocate, and the Spirit sustaining a like character, is only mentioned; and he being God against whom sin is committed, and to whom the satisfaction is made; and the rather, as he is the Father of Christ, and of those for whom he is an advocate; seeing it may be concluded that his pleadings will be with success, since he is not

only related to him, and has an interest in him himself, but the persons also whose patron he is, are related to him, and have a share in his paternal affection and care: moreover, this phrase, as it expresses the distinct personality of Christ from the Father, so his being with him in heaven at his right hand, and nearness to him; where he discharges this office of his, partly by appearing in person for his people in the presence of God; and partly by carrying in and presenting their confessions of sin, and their prayers for the fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, which he offers up to his Father with the sweet incense of his mediation; and chiefly by pleading the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which are carried within the veil, and are always in sight, and call aloud for peace and pardon; as also by answering and removing the charges and accusations of the court-adversary, the accuser of the brethren, the devil; as well as by the declarations of his will, demanding in point of justice, in consideration of his sufferings and death, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon his people, as pardon, righteousness, grace, and supplies of grace, and at last glory; and by applying these benefits to their souls as a comforter, which the word here used also signifies, and is so rendered, *John* xiv. 16, 26. and chapters xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and by the Arabic version here. Now the saints have but one advocate, and that is enough for them; the apostle does not say we have advocates, but *an advocate*; not angels, nor saints departed, but Jesus Christ only, who is the one mediator between God and man: and he is a continual one, he ever lives to make intercession; his blood is always speaking, and he is always pleading; and therefore it is said *we have*, not we have had, or we shall have an advocate: and he is a prevalent one, he is always heard, he thoroughly pleads the cause he undertakes, and ever carries it; which is owing to the dignity of his person, his interest with his Father, and the virtue and value of his sacrifice: and he is every way fit for such a work, for he is *righteous*; not only in his natures, both divine and human, but in his office, as mediator, which he faithfully and righteously performs; he is a very proper person to plead for guilty persons, which he could not do if he himself was guilty; but he is so holy and righteous that nothing can be objected to him by God; and it need not be doubted by men that he will act the faithful part to them, and righteously serve them and their cause; and it is moreover his righteousness which he has wrought out, and is imputed to them, that carries the cause for them; and therefore this character of Christ is fitly added, as is also the following. The Jews

Jews (i) have adopted the word in the text into their language, but have applied it to a different purpose, to alms-deeds, repentance, and good works. Much more agreeably Philo the Jew (k) speaks of the son of perfect virtue, *υπαπαντης*, "as an advocate" for the forgiveness of sins, and for a supply of everlasting good things.

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for our's only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

And he is the propitiation for our sins] For the sins of us who now believe, and are Jews.

And not for our's only] But for the sins of Old Testament saints, and of those who shall hereafter believe in Christ, and of the Gentiles also, signified in the next clause.

But also for the sins of the whole world] The Syriac version renders it, "not for us only, but also for the whole world;" that is, not for the Jews only, for John was a Jew, and so were those he wrote unto, but for the Gentiles also. Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles *עולם*, "the world;" and *כל העולם*, "the whole world;" and *העולם* *אומות* "the nations of the world (l)"; see the note on *John* xii. 19. and the word *world* is so used in scripture; see *John* iii. 16. and chapter iv. 42. *Rom.* xi. 12, 15. and stands opposed to a notion the Jews have of the Gentiles, that *כפרה אין להן* "there is no propitiation for them (m)"; and it is easy to observe, that when this phrase is not used of the Gentiles, it is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as when they say (n), "it happened to a certain high priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary *כולי עולם*, "the whole world" went after him;" which could only design the people in the temple. And elsewhere (o) it is said, "כולי עולם, "the whole world," has left the *Misna*, and gone after "the *Gemara*;" which at most can only intend the Jews; and indeed only a majority of their doctors who were conversant with these writings: and in another place (p), "כולי עולם, "the whole world," fell on their faces, but *Raf* did not fall on his face;" where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is said (q) when "R. Simeon ben Gamaliel entered (the *synagogue*) *כולי עולם*, "the whole world,"

"stood up before him;" that is, the people in the synagogue: to which may be added (r), "when a great man makes a mourning, *עולם כולי*, "the whole world" come to honour him;" that is, a great number of persons attend the funeral pomp: and so these phrases, *כולי עולם* *לוי עלי*, "the whole world" is not divided, or does not dissent (s); *כולי עולם* *טברי*, "the whole world" are of opinion (t), are frequently met with in the Talmud, by which an agreement among the Rabbins, in certain points, is designed; yea, sometimes the phrase "all the men of the world (u)" only intend the inhabitants of a city where a synagogue was, and at most, only the Jews: and so this phrase, "all the world," or "the whole world," in scripture, unless when it signifies the whole universe, or the habitable earth, is always used in a limited sense, either for the Roman empire, or the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, *Luke* ii. 1. *Rom.* i. 8. and chapter iii. 19. *Col.* i. 6. *Rev.* iii. 10. chapters xii. 9. and xiii. 3. and so it is in this epistle, chapter v. 19. where the whole world lying in wickedness is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be understood of all the individuals in the world; and the like distinction is in this text itself, for *the sins of the whole world* are opposed to *our sins*, the sins of the apostle and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, as for theirs: so that this passage cannot furnish out any argument for universal redemption; for besides these things, it may be further observed, that for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, their sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their persons justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; so that in the event it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation he is also an advocate, *ף. 1.* but he is not an advocate for every individual person in the world; yea, there is a world, he will not pray

(i) Pirke Abot, c. 4. §. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32, 1. T. Bab.

E va Bathra, fol. 20. 1.

(k) De vit. Moiss. l. iii. p. 673.

(l) Jarchi in Isa. liii. 5.

(m) T. Hierof. Nazir. fol. 57, 3.

vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 1.

(n) T. Bab. Yoma,

fol. 71. 2.

(o) T. Bab. Bava Metsia, fol. 33. 2.

(p) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 22. 2.

(q) T. Bab. Horayot,

fol. 13. 2.

(r) Pirke Toseph Megilla, Art. 104.

(s) T. Bab. Cetubot,

fol. 90. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 47. 2. & 49. 1. & 65. 2. & Git-

tin, fol. 8. 1. & 60. 2.

(t) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 48. 1.

(u) Maimon. Hilch. Teph'le, c. 11. §. 16.

pray for, and consequently, is not a propitiation for them. Once more, the design of the apostle in these words is to comfort his *little children* with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency; but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of those that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might, and would be their case. In what sense Christ is a propitiation, see the note on *Rom. iii. 25*. The Jews have no notion of the Messiah as a propitiation or atonement: sometimes they say (*w*), repentance atones for all sin; sometimes the death of the righteous (*x*); sometimes incense (*y*); sometimes the priests garments (*z*); sometimes it is the day of atonement (*a*); and indeed they are in the utmost puzzle about atonement; and they even confess in their prayers (*b*), that they have now neither altar, nor priest to atone for them; see the note on chapter iv. 10.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

And hereby we do know that we know him] Either the Father, with whom Christ is an advocate; not as the God of nature, and by the light of it, nor as the Law-giver and judge of the whole earth, and by the law of Moses; but as the God of all grace, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, as the Father of Christ, and as in him, by the Gospel; and this is not in a mere notional and speculative way, but with love and affection; not with fear and trembling, as devils know him, nor in theory, as formal professors and hypocrites, but with a knowledge, joined with hearty love of him, and cheerful obedience to him: or else Christ the advocate and propitiation for sin; and him also, not with a mere notional knowledge of his person and offices, which carnal men and devils themselves have of him, but with that which is spiritual, special, and saving, being from the Spirit and grace of God; and regards Christ as a Saviour, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and an

advocate with God the Father; and by which he is approved as such, to the rejection of all other saviours, sacrifices, and advocates; and is trusted, confided, and believed in as such, and affectionately loved, and that above all others, in sincerity and truth; and is readily obeyed in his word and ordinances; for where there is true knowledge of Christ, there is faith in him; and where there is faith in him, there is love to him, for faith works by love; and where there is love to him, there will be an observance of his commands; and this is here made the evidence of the true knowledge of him: for it follows,

If we keep his commandments] Not the commandments of men, for the keeping of them arises from ignorance of God, and is a proof of it; nor the commandments of the ceremonial law, which are abolished, particularly circumcision, which is opposed to the keeping of the commandments of God, *1 Cor. vii. 19*. but either those of the moral law, and which are more particularly the commandments of God the Father; the observance of which, though it cannot be with perfection, yet being in faith, and from love to God, and with a view to his glory, is an evidence of the true knowledge of him, and of his will: or else those commandments, which are more especially the commandments of Christ Jesus; such as the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper, which are peculiar to the Gospel-dispensation; and which being kept as they were delivered by Christ, and in his name and strength, and to his glory, without depending on them for life and salvation, is an argument and proof of the right knowledge of him; and particularly his new commandment of loving one another, may be chiefly designed, that being what the apostle has greatly in view throughout this epistle; now let it be observed, that keeping of the commands of God, or Christ, is not the knowledge of either of them itself, for much may be done in an external way, yet neither God nor Christ be spiritually and savingly known; nor is it the cause of such knowledge, for that is owing to the Spirit and grace of God; but is an effect or consequence of spiritual knowledge, and so an evidence of it; hereby is not the knowledge itself, but the knowledge of that knowledge, that is, that it is true and genuine.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

He that saith, I know him] God or Christ, as the Gnostics did, who pretended to great, even perfect knowledge of divine things.

X x

And

(w) Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 1. (x) Ibid. fol. 24. 1.
T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2. (y) T. Bab. Zebachim,
fol. 88. 2. & Erachin, fol. 16. 1. (z) T. Bab. Zebachim,
ibid. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 44. 2. (a) T. Bab. Yoma,
fol. 37. 1. & T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 45. 2, 3. (b) Seder
Tephillot, fol. 41. 1. Ed. Amsterd.

And keepeth not his commandments] Which the above persons had no regard to, and as many who profess great light and knowledge, in our days, shew no concern for.

Is a liar] He contradicts what he says, and gives the lie to it; for though in words he professes to know God, in works he denies him, and which betrays his ignorance of him.

And the truth is not in him] There is no true knowledge of God and Christ in him; nor is the truth of the Gospel in his heart, however it may be in his head; nor is the truth of grace in him, for each of these lead persons to obedience. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the truth of God is not with him;" see the note on chap. i. 8.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

But whoso keepeth his word] Either the word of the Gospel, and the truths of it, who receives it in love, cordially embraces and retains it, and will by no means part with it, but holds it fast, and stands fast in it; or the precepts and ordinances of the word, who loves these, and esteems them above fine gold, and concerning all things to be right, and observes them as they should be.

In him verily is the love of God perfected] Not the love wherewith God loves him, for that is perfect in himself, and admits of no degrees, and cannot be more or less in his heart, and is intirely independent of the obedience of men, or any works of theirs; it is true indeed the manifestations of this love to the saints are imperfect, and may be more and greater, and greater manifestations of love are promised to such that love Christ, and keep his commandments, *John* xiv. 21, 23. but here it is to be understood not actively, but passively, of the love wherewith God is loved by his people; and intends not the absolute perfection of it in them, in whom it often waxes cold, and is less, or the fervour of it abated, but the sincerity and reality of it; for by keeping the word of God, both his truths and his ordinances, it is clearly seen that their love to him is without dissimulation, and is not in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: now it is not the keeping of the word of God that causes this love, or makes it perfect or sincere, for it is a fruit of the Spirit, and is owing to the grace of God; but love on the other hand, is the cause of keeping of the word; and the latter being a consequent and an effect of the former, is the evidence of it, of the truth and sincerity of it.

Hereby know we that we are in him] In Christ, not merely nominally, or by profession, as all that name the name of Christ, and are in a Gospel-church-state, may be said to be; but really, first secretly, through the love of Christ, the election of God, and the covenant of grace, and then openly, in conversion and effectual vocation, through believing in Christ, when the saints appear to be in him as branches in the vine; and which is known by their fruits, as here, by keeping the word, and doing the commandments of Christ, which do not put a man into Christ, but only shew that he is there; for a man's being in Christ is owing to the grace of God; this is the first thing done in grace, *1 Cor.* i. 30.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

He that saith he abideth in him] As all do that are in him; once in Christ, and always in Christ; they are set as a seal on his arm and heart, which can never be removed; they are in his arms, and can never be plucked from thence; and are members of him, and can never be disunited from him: or dwelleth in him, as in *John* vi. 56. that is, by faith; who under a sense of sin and danger, have fled to Christ, as to a strong tower and place of defence, where they dwell safely, peaceably, pleasantly, and comfortably, enjoying whatever is necessary for them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "he that saith I am in him;" loved by him, chosen in him, united to him, a member of his, and have communion with him.

Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked] As Christ walked, lived, and acted, so ought he; that is, to imitate him and follow him, as he has him for an example; not in his miraculous works, in raising the dead, healing the sick, and walking upon the waters, &c. which were wrought as proofs of his deity and of his Messiahship, and not intended for imitation; nor in his mediatorial performances, as in his propitiatory sacrifice and advocacy; but in the exercise of grace, and duties of religion as a man, and in a private way; and may chiefly regard walking in love, as he walked, see *Eph.* v. 2. and is what is in the following verses insisted on, namely, the new commandment of love to the brethren; which should be to all, as his was, and, like his, constant and lasting; and, when the case requires, should be shewn by laying down life for them. The *as* is not a note of equality, but of likeness; for it cannot be thought that saints should walk in that degree of perfection, in humility, patience, love, and in the exercise of every other grace, and in the discharge

discharge of duty, as Christ did; only that they should copy after him, and make his obedience and life the rule of theirs.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you] Some understand this of faith, which this apostle calls a commandment, chap. iii. 23. but it rather intends the commandment of love, especially to the brethren, of which the apostle says the same things as here, in his second epistle, 1. 5, 6. and this sense agrees both with what goes before, and follows after, and is a considerable branch of the commandments of Christ to be kept, and of walking as he walked; and the word *brethren*, prefixed to this account, may direct to, and strengthen this sense, though the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "beloved;" and so the Alexandrian copy, and others: and this commandment is said to be not a new one,

But an old commandment which ye had from the beginning] It being in its original a part of the eternal law of truth, founded upon the unalterable nature and eternal will of God, who is love itself, and requires it in all his creatures; being what was written on Adam's heart in a state of innocence, and a branch of the divine image stamped upon him; and is what was delivered in the law of Moses, for love to God and men is the sum and substance of that; and was taught by Christ and his apostles, from the beginning of the Gospel-dispensation; and was what these saints had been acquainted with, and influentially instructed in from their first conversion, being taught of God in regeneration to love one another; so that this was no novel doctrine, no upstart notion, no new law, but of the greatest and most venerable antiquity, and therefore to be regarded in the most respectful manner.

The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning] Or this ancient law of love is contained in, and enforced by that word or doctrine, which was delivered from the beginning of time; and which these saints had heard of, concerning the seed of the woman's bruising the serpent's head, which includes the work of redemption and salvation by Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, forgiveness of sin through his blood, and justification by his righteousness, than which nothing can more powerfully engage to love God, and Christ, and one another; and

which is also strongly encouraged by the word of God, and Gospel of Christ, which they had heard, and had a spiritual and saving knowledge of, from the time they were effectually called by the grace of God: the phrase, *from the beginning*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; it is omitted in both clauses of the text in the latter.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you] Which is the same with the former, considered in different respects. The command of brotherly love is a new one; that is, it is an excellent one, as a new name is an excellent name, and a new song is an excellent one; it is renewed by Christ under the Gospel-dispensation; it is newly explained by him, and purged from the false glosses of the scribes and Pharisees; see *Matt.* v. 43, 44. and enforced by him with a new argument, and by a new example of his own, even his own love to his people; and which is observed by them in a new manner, they being made new creatures; and this law being anew written in their hearts, under the renewing work of the Spirit of God, as a branch of the new covenant of grace; see *John* xiii. 34. The Jews (*t*) expect, תורה חדשה, "a new law" to be given them by the hands of the Messiah; and a new one he has given, even the new commandment of love, and which is the fulfilling of the law.

Which thing is true in him and in you] The Alexandrian copy reads, "in us;" the sense is either, it is true "in itself," as the phrase will bear to be rendered, and it is verified in you, or in us, to be a new commandment; or it is true in Christ, it is yea and amen in him; it has its full completion in him, who is the fulfilling end of the law, as well as it has been faithfully delivered, truly explained, and warmly and affectionately recommended and urged by him; and he is the great pattern and exemplar of it: and the love which this new commandment requires, is really and truly in the saints, implanted in them in regeneration, is a fruit of the Spirit, and which faith works by, and will always continue in them; and should be in its actings like Christ's true, sincere, cordial, affectionate, constant, and universal: and some think the word *is*, or *is*, or *let it* be.

be, is wanting in the last clause, and may be read, *which thing is true in him, and is, or let it be in you*; that is, as love to the brethren is true and sincere in Christ, so it is, or should be in you; it should be without dissimulation, and so it was, as the reason following shews.

Because the darkness is past] Or *is passing*; meaning either the darkness of the ceremonial law, which lay in dark types and shadows, and in cloudy sacrifices, and mystical representations of things, and was a shadow of good things to come; and its shadows were now fleeing away apace, in fact as well as in right; and so the Alexandrian copy reads, "because the shadow is passing away;" the light of Jewish darkness was far spent, and the Gospel-day was not only broke, but it was, or near noon-day, which brought the light of faith, and the heat of love with it: or else the darkness of sin and ignorance, of a state of nature, and of the kingdom of Satan, in which the people of God are before conversion; which then passes away gradually, by little and little, for it is not removed at once, or wholly gone; for though the saints are at once removed out of a state of darkness, and from the kingdom of darkness, and the power of it, yet they are not wholly free from the darkness of sin and ignorance, they still see but through a glass darkly: and the words are better rendered, "the darkness passes," or "is passing away," and not, "is past," or "has passed away;" for as yet it is not entirely gone.

And the true light now shineth] Either the Gospel, which is a light, and a true and substantial one, in distinction from the dim light of nature, or the shadowy law of Moses; and which now, under the present dispensation, shines out in a most glorious manner, as the sun in its full strength; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "the light of truth;" the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation: or Jesus Christ, who is so called, *John* i. 9. in distinction from typical lights, as the Urim on the high-priest's breastplate, the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, and the pillar of fire by night, which guided the Israelites through the wilderness; and in opposition to all false lights, to the scribes and Pharisees, to false Christs, and false prophets, which are so many *ignes fatui*; but Christ is the sun of righteousness, that is risen in our horizon, and the true light which shines out in a most illustrious manner: or the light of grace is here intended, that light which the Spirit of God illuminates with in conversion; in which a man sees sin in its true colours, and has a spiritual and saving sight of Christ, of pardon, peace, life, righteousness, and salvation by him; which is no other than the

light of faith, by which an enlightened person sees the Son, looks to him, and has an evidence of the unseen glories of another world. Now this is a true light, things are seen by the believer in a right light, both his own sins, and the person, blood and righteousness of Christ; this is a shining one, which cannot but be observed by himself, and shines more and more to the perfect day; and it now shines as it did not before, in a state of nature, and continues to shine, and ever will: this light will never be put out, and is the cause of brotherly love, being truly in the saints, and of the continuance of it; before this light shines, men live in malice, but when it comes and shines, as they walk in light, they walk in love.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

He that saith he is in the light] Is in Christ the light, or has the true knowledge of the light of the Gospel, or is illuminated by the Spirit of God; for persons may profess to be enlightened ones, and not be so: wherefore the apostle does not say, he that is in the light, but he that says he is,

And hateth his brother] Who is so either by creation, as all men are brethren, having one Father, that has made them, and brought them up; or by regeneration, being born of God, the Father, and in the same family and household of faith; and so regards such who are in a spiritual relation, whom to hate internally, or not to love, is inconsistent with being in the light, or having faith, which is always naturally and necessarily accompanied with the heat of love; for as light and heat, so faith and love go together: wherefore, let a man's profession of light be what it will, if love to his brother be wanting, he

Is in darkness even until now] He is in a state of nature and unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness and ignorance; he is under the power of darkness, and in the kingdom of Satan, who is the ruler of the darkness of this world; he ever was so from his birth; he never was called, nor delivered out of it, but is still in it to this moment, and so remains. This seems to be very much levelled against the Jews, who make hatred of the brother in some cases lawful: for they say (d), "If one man observes sin in another, and re- proves him for it, and he does not receive his reproof, מותר לשנאתו" "it is lawful to hate him;" see the note on *Matt.* v. 43.

10 He

(d) Moses Kotlenka's *Mitzvot Torah*, pt. neg. 5.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

He that loveth his brother] As such, and because he is his brother in Christ, and that cordially and sincerely, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and by love serves him, both in things temporal and spiritual, and so observes the new, and yet old commandment,

Abideth in the light] It is a plain case, that such a man is in the light of grace and continues in it; for though it is not his love to the brethren, which is the cause of his light, of his being and continuing in it, for that is owing to the Spirit of light and knowledge, but on the contrary, light is the cause of his love; yet it is an evidence of it, that by which it is known, as the cause is known by the effect; see 1 John iii. 14.

And there is none occasion of stumbling in him] Or "there is no scandal," or "offence in him;" he gives no offence to his brother, or at least as much as in him lies, he takes care that he gives none; he avoids as much as can be, putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way, by the use of things indifferent, or by any other action; nor will he easily take offence at what is said or done unto him, for charity or love is not easily provoked, it suffers long, and bears all things; see 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7. nor does he so much, and so frequently transgress the laws of God, and particularly those which regard his neighbour, or his brother, and so easily fall into the snares of Satan, because he is in the light, and walks in the light, and sees his way, and what lies in his way, and so shuns and avoids occasion of stumbling and falling. There is not in him that wrath, and malice, and envy, which lead on to the commission of other sins; for love works no ill, but fulfills the law, and will not suffer him to commit adultery, to kill, to steal, or bear false witness against his neighbour, friend, and brother; see Rom xiii. 9, 10. and such an one enjoys great peace, tranquillity, and happiness; he has much comfort in himself, and pleasure in the saints, and delight in their company; he walks inoffensively, and in an harmless manner, without hurting himself, or any other, Psalm exix. 165.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness] As is before expressed in y. 9. to which is added,

And walketh in darkness] He goes on in it, and takes delight in it, as dangerous and uncomfortable as it is.

And knoweth not whither he goeth] He cannot discern between good and evil; he puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; he sees not what is before him, nor what stumbling-blocks lie in the way; he is not aware of the snares, pits, and traps he is in danger of falling into; nor does he know and consider what these paths of darkness, of sin, and ignorance, and infidelity lead unto, even unto utter darkness, where is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and the reason is,

Because that darkness hath blinded his eyes] Either Satan, the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, and who is darkness itself, and the cause of darkness in himself, and in others, and one of whose names this was with the Jews (e); see the note on Luke xxii. 53. or that natural darkness which sin has brought upon the understanding, and has blinded the eyes of it, called the blindness of the heart, Eph. iv. 18. so that a man, under the power of it, is ignorant of himself, and knows not that he is blind and miserable; is a stranger to the way of peace, and life by Christ, and knows not what he is about, and where he is, or whither he is going, and what his end will be.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his names sake.

I write unto you, little children] By whom the apostle means in common all the saints he writes to, whom he afterwards distributes into fathers, young men, and little children; for the same word is used here, as in y. 1. and a different one from that which is rendered *little children* in the next verse; and besides, the following blessing of pardon of sin is common to all the children of God of different ages: now what the apostle says he writes unto them, intends not the epistle in general, but the new commandment of love in particular; and which he urges and enforces on them all, for this reason,

Because your sins are forgiven you for his names sake] These little children had been sinners by nature and practice, and were not now without sin, but they shared in the blessing of the forgiveness of it; which arises from the abundant mercy and rich grace of God; and proceeds on the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and therefore is said to be

fer

(e) Yalkut Simoni, par. a. fol. 44. 4.

for his names sake; not for the sake of any merits in men, any services or works of theirs, but for the sake of Christ, his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; and it reaches to all sins, original and actual, secret and open, past, present, and to come; and here intends the application of it by the Spirit of God, and the reception of it by faith: and which, as it is a reason and argument encouraging love to God, who freely and fully forgives, and to Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin, so to their brethren and fellow-Christians; who are equally sharers in the same blessing, and whom they should love, because they are loved of God and Christ; and whom they should forgive, because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven them. It may be, they may be called here *little children*, with a view to their interest in this blessing of grace. So the Jews say (*f*), that Saul was called "*the son of one year in his reign*," 1 Sam. xiii. 1. because all his iniquities were forgiven him, כחנין, "as a sucking child" of a year old."

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

[*I write unto you, fathers*] Not merely in age, though they might be men in years who are here intended, or only with respect to their long standing in the church, which might be the case; though persons may be in years, and of a long standing in the church, and yet be children in knowledge and experience: but here it designs such, who, in comparison of others, were perfect, and were spiritual, and judged all things; had a well-informed and established judgment in divine things, and were in understanding men, fathers, and not babes in Christ; so the Jews used to call their men of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, *man*, "Abot, fathers." Hence there is a whole treatise in the Mishna called *Pirke Abot*, which contains the apothegms, wise sayings, and sentences of their fathers, or wise men. Now the apostle writes the new commandment of love, and urges it on these, for this reason,

[*Because ye have known him that is from the beginning*] Either God the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the ancient of days, the eternal I AM, whom to know is life eternal; whose everlasting love to them, whose covenant

of grace with his Son for them, before the world was, and the ancient transactions and settlements of his grace on their account, they were acquainted with: or Jesus Christ, the Logos or Word, which was from the beginning, who existed from all eternity, as a divine person, as the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father; as the eternal choice made in him, and the everlasting covenant with him shew; and who in his office-capacity, as mediator, was set up from everlasting: and who, with respect to the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, was from the beginning of the world, and was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; it being by his blood that all the patriarchs, from the beginning of time, were pardoned, and by his righteousness they were justified, and by his grace they were saved; all which respecting the antiquity of Christ's person, office, and grace, was known to these fathers: they knew him, so as to approve of him, trust in him, and appropriate him to themselves, and which obliged them to the new commandment of love, not only to God and Christ, but to one another; and the reason here given, engaging to it, is exceeding suitable to their character, it being what fathers and aged men delight in, even ancient things, to call them to remembrance, to talk of them as things well known unto them; but nothing is more ancient than what is here instanced in, and nothing so honourable and profitable to know as this, or to be glorified in; and therefore the argument from hence to love those that belong to him, who is the everlasting Father, is very strong and forcible.

[*I write unto you, young men*] Who are warm and zealous for God, for his cause and interest, for the glory of a Redeemer, for his truths and ordinances; and are lively in the exercise of grace, and fervent in the discharge of duty; and are active, diligent, and industrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and are strong and robust, able to go alone, to walk by faith, being strong in it, and in the grace that is in Christ, and do not need the staff that old age does, nor the hand to lead and teach to go as children do: to these the apostle writes the new commandment of love, for this reason,

[*Because ye have overcome the wicked one*] Satan, who is eminently so, being the first that was, and the worst that is so; for he is wickedness itself, he is wholly, entirely, immutably, and unalterably wicked; and his whole work and employment is in wickedness. Now these young men had overcome him, not only in Christ their head, who has spoiled him, destroyed him, and led him captive

(f) T. Hierof. Biecurim, fol. 65. 4.

tive in triumph, in whom they were more than conquerors; but in themselves, through the power of divine grace, holding up, and making use of the shield of faith against him, whereby they quenched the fiery darts, and got the victory over him: and this is also said in perfect agreement with the character of young men, who are apt to glory in their strength, and are fond of getting the advantage, or a victory over others; and which is used to teach such as are so in a spiritual sense, not to glory in their strength, but in the Lord; and to love him whom they know, and whose loving kindness is exercised towards them, and in Christ; and to love him through whom they get the victory, and to bear the infirmities of weaker saints, to whom they should be strongly affected.

I write unto you, little children] Or babes in Christ, such as were new-born babes, just born again, not able to go alone, or walk by faith, but were dandled on the knee, and lay at the breasts of divine consolation; could speak but stammeringly, and not plain, it being as much as they could do, to say Abba, father. To these the apostle writes, and urges the new commandment of love, for this reason,

Because ye have known the Father] The Father of Christ, and him, as their Father in Christ, under the witnessings of the Spirit of adoption; so as, in some good measure, to hope and believe he was their Father, and to love, honour, and obey him as such, to apply to him for whatever they stood in need of, and always to put themselves under his care and protection; and a consideration of this their relation to him, and interest in him, is a strong and prevailing argument why they should not only love him, their Father and Christ, who is begotten of him, but also all the saints who are the children of this their Father, and their brethren; and very aptly does the apostle mention their knowledge of the Father as suitable to their age and character, it being one of the first and most necessary things for a child to know.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

I have written unto you, fathers] This, with the reason annexed to it, is repeated, to raise the attention of the aged servants of Christ, and to

quicken them to a discharge of their duty, who are apt to abate in their zeal, to grow lukewarm and indifferent, to cleave to the world, and to the things of it, which they are cautioned against in the following verse. The whole of this, with the reason,

Because ye have known him that is from the beginning] Is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, and Complutenian edition.

I have written unto you, young men] This repetition to them, with some additions, is also made, to stir them up the more to love the faints, who are too apt to be carried away with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, warned against in *1*. 16.

Because ye are strong] Not naturally, for sin has sadly weakened human nature, so that a man, by the strength of nature, can do nothing that is spiritually good; nor in themselves, though regenerated, but in Christ, in whom are righteousness and strength; without whom they can do nothing, though they can do all things through him strengthening them; and so are strong in the exercise of grace on him, and in the performance of every duty, being strengthened by him with strength in their souls.

And the word of God abideth in you] Either Christ the Logos, the essential Word of God, who might be said to be in them, and abide in them, because his grace was implanted in their hearts, called Christ, formed there, and because he dwelt in their hearts by faith, and lived in them; and hence they had their strength, or came to be so strong as they were, and also overcame Satan, because he that was in them was greater than he that is in the world: or else the Gospel is meant, which cometh not in word only, but in power, has a place in the heart, and works effectually, and dwells richly there; and this is a means of spiritual strength against sin and temptation, and to perform duty, and to stand fast in the truth against the errors and heresies of men; and is that piece of spiritual armour, the sword of the Spirit, by which Satan is often foiled, and overcome: hence it follows,

And ye have overcome the wicked one] See the note on *1*. 13.

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Love not the world] The habitable earth, the world in which men live; this is not to be loved by

by saints, as if it was their habitation, where they are always to be, and so loth to remove from it, seeing they are but sojourners, and pilgrims, and strangers here; this is not their rest, nor dwelling-place, their continuing city, or proper country, that is heaven. Nor should they love the men of the world; who are as they came into it, are of it, and mind the things of it, and lie in wickedness, and are wicked men; for though these are to be loved, as men, as fellow-creatures, and their good, both spiritual and temporal, is to be sought, and good is to be done to them, as much as lies in our power, both with respect to soul and body; yet their company is not to be chosen, and preferred to the saints, but to be shunned and avoided, as disagreeable and dangerous; their evil conversation, and wicked communications, are not to be loved, but abhorred, and their works of darkness are to be re-proved; nor are their ways to be imitated, and their customs followed, or their manners to be conformed unto.

Neither the things that are in the world] Good men that are in the world, though they are not of the world, are to be loved; and the kingdom of Christ, though it is not of the world, yet it is in the world, and is to be regarded and promoted to the uttermost; and there are the natural and civil things of the world, called this world's goods, which may be loved within due bounds, and used in a proper manner, though they are not to be loved inordinately and abused. This is the character of worldly men; so the Jews call such, *אנשי העולם הזה*, "such that love this world (g)." Near relations and friends in the world, and the blessings of life, may be loved and enjoyed in their way, but not above God and Christ, or so as to take up satisfaction and contentment in them, to make idols of them, and put trust and confidence in them, and prefer them to spiritual and heavenly things, and be so taken with them, as to be unconcerned for, and careless about the other; but the evil things of the world, or at least the evil use of them, and affection for them, are here intended, as appears from the following verse. Now it is chiefly with respect to the fathers, and young men, that this exhortation is given; and the repetition of what is said to them before, is made, to introduce this; which is exceeding suitable to their age and characters. Old men are apt to be covetous and love the world, and worldly things, just when they are going out of it, and about to leave them; and young men are apt to be carried away with lust, vanity, ambition, and pride: and therefore, from each of

these, the apostle dissuades, from the following arguments.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him] That is, "the love of God," as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read; who is the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and who is indeed, by creation, the Father of all men, the Father of spirits, of the souls of men, and of angels, and the Father of mercies, and of lights, and by the love of him is meant, either the love with which he loves his people, and which being shed abroad in the heart, attracts the soul to himself, and causes it to love him above the world, and all things in it; and such an one esteems of it, and an interest in it, more than life, and all the enjoyments of it, and is by it loosened to the world, and sets light by it, and can part with all good things in it, and suffer all things cheerfully, under the constraints and influence of this love; so that it is a clear case, that when the affections of men are set upon the world, and they are glued to the things of it, their hearts are not warmed with a sense of the love of God, or that is not sensibly in them, or shed abroad in their hearts: or else by the love of God is meant love to God, which is inconsistent with the love of the world, or with such an inordinate love of mammon, as to serve it; for a man may as soon serve two masters, as serve God and mammon, which he can never do truly, faithfully, and affectionately; and which also is not consistent with friendship with the men of the world, or a conversation and fellowship with them, in things that are evil, whether superstition or profaneness; see *Matthew vi. 24. James iv. 4.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

For all that is in the world] This is the sum of the evil things in the world; or these following are the objects of sin in the world, or about which wicked men are conversant; even such as are carnal or grateful to the flesh, visible to the eye, and belong to this vain life, or serve to fill with pride and vanity; or these are the main things, which men that love the world, most highly value and esteem.

The lust of the flesh] By which is meant, not lust in general, or concupiscence, the corruption of nature, which is the fountain of all sin, or indwelling sin, the flesh, or that corrupt principle, which lusts against the spirit; nor the various lusts

(g) Kimchi in Psalm xlix. 2. Ben Melech in *ibid.* ver. 14.

lusts of the flesh, fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and which are many, and are also called worldly lusts; but some particular one, "a lust of the body," as the Syriac version reads; either the lust of uncleanness, which includes all unchaste desires, thoughts, words, and actions, fornication, adultery, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; and which make up a considerable part of the all that is in the world: or else intemperance in eating and drinking, gluttony and drunkenness, excess of wine, surfeittings, rioting, and revellings, and all the sensual pleasures of life, by which the carnal mind, and the lusts of it, are gratified; whereby the soul is destroyed, the body is dishonoured, and a wound, dishonour, and reproach brought on the character, not to be removed; for which reasons the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: the next follows,

And the lust of the eyes] After unlawful objects, and may design unchaste and lascivious looks, eyes full of adultery, and whereby adultery is committed; see *Matt. v. 28.* but then this falls in with the other, unless that be confined to intemperance; rather then this may intend a sinful curiosity of seeing vain sights, and shews, with which the eye of man is never satisfied, *Ecc. i. 8.* and against which the psalmist prays, *Psal. cxix. 37.* or rather the sin of covetousness is here designed, the objects of which are visible things, as gold, silver, houses, lands, and possessions, with which riches, the eyes of men are never satisfied, and which sin is drawn forth and cherished by the eyes; and indeed, a covetous man has little more satisfaction than the beholding his substance with his eyes, and in which he takes much sinful pleasure; see *Ecc. iv. 8.* and chapter *v. 11.* and what a poor vain empty thing is this? therefore, love not the world, since this is a principal thing in it.

And the pride of life] By which seems to be meant, ambition of honour, of chief places, and high titles, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matt. xxiii. 6, 7,* or of grand living, for the word signifies not so much life as living; living in a sumptuous, gay, luxurious, and pompous manner, in rich diet, costly apparel, having fine seats, palaces, and stately buildings, and numerous attendance; all which is but vanity and vexation of spirit; see *Ecc. ii. 1, 3—8, 11.* The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "the pride of the age;" and every age has some peculiar things in which the pride of it appears. Now these

Is not of the Father] "Of God the Father," as
Vol. V.

the Ethiopic version reads; the things which are desired and lusted after are of God, but not the lust itself; God is not the author of sin, nor is it agreeable to his will.

But is of the world] Of the men of it, and agreeable to their carnal minds; and is a reason why things of the world are not to be loved by the saints, who are not of it, but chosen and called out of it; and besides, all these things are mean, base, vile, and contemptible, and unworthy of their love and affection.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

And the world passeth away] Not the matter and substance, but the fashion, form, and scheme of it, *1 Cor. vii. 31.* kingdoms, cities, towns, houses, families, estates, and possessions, are continually changing, and casting into different hands, and different forms; the men of the world, the inhabitants of it, are continually removing; one generation goes, and another comes; new faces are continually appearing; the riches and honours of the world are fading, perishing, and transitory things; every thing is upon the flux, nothing is permanent; which is another argument why the world, and the things of it, are not be loved.

And the lust thereof] Also passes away; and objects of lust are fading and fleeting, as beauty, and riches, and honours; these are continually taking away from men, or men are taken away from them, and will not be hereafter; and even the pleasure of lust itself passes away, as soon as enjoyed; the pleasures of sin are but for a season, and a very short one; and are indeed but imaginary, and leave a real bitterness and sorrow behind them, and at length bring a man to ruin and destruction.

But he that doeth the will of God] Not perfectly as contained in the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for no man can do that in such a manner, though a regenerate man desires to do it, even as it is done in heaven, and serves the law of God with his mind, and under the influence of the Spirit of God; and does walk in his statutes, and keeps his judgments from a principle of love, in faith, and without mercenary views, and sinister ends, without depending on what he does for life and salvation; and such an one may be said to be a doer of the will of God: though rather here it intends such an one as believes in Christ, as the propitiation for his sins, and as his advocate with the Father, and who
Y y makes

makes Christ his pattern and example, and walks as he walked; and particularly observes the new commandment of love, loves God, and Christ, and his fellow-Christians, and not the world, and the things of it: and such a man is happy, for he

Abideth for ever] In the love of God, which will never depart from him, nor shall he be separated from that; and in the hands and arms of Christ, out of which none can pluck him; and in the family and household of God, where he, as a son, abides for ever, and shall never be cast out; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in a state of grace and holiness, from whence he shall never fall, totally and finally; and in heaven, with Christ, to all eternity: the reason of this his abiding, is not his doing the will of God, which is only descriptive of him manifestatively, and not the cause of his perpetuity and immoveableness; but his eternal election of God, which stands sure, not on the foot of works, but of him that calleth; and the covenant of grace, in which he is interested, and which is immoveable, sure, firm, and inviolable; and the foundation Jesus Christ, on which he is built; and the principle of grace in him, which always remains, and is connected with eternal life.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Little children, it is the last time] Or *hour*; not of the Jewish civil and church-state, for that had been at an end for some time; this epistle was written some years after the destruction of Jerusalem; nor the last hour of the Gospel-dispensation, or world to come, for this was but the first age of that; and much less the last hour of time, or of the present world itself, for that has been many hundreds of years since; but the last hour of the apostolic age. All the apostles were now dead, John was the last of them; perilous times were now coming on, impostors and heretics were rising apace, against which the apostle cautions his little children; and so still he writes to them, agreeable to their age and character, who, being such, were most likely to be imposed upon by those who lie in wait to deceive.

And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come] Or *is coming*; and begins to shew himself in the false teachers and deceivers, who were his fore-runners; and this they had heard and understood, either from the words of Christ in *John* v. 43. or

from the account the apostle Paul gave to the Thessalonians concerning him, *2 Thessalonians* ii. 3; 4; 7-10. or rather it may be from what the apostle had said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, where the apostle John now was, when he met them at Miletus, *Acts* xx. 29, 30.

Even now there are many antichrists] The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "false Christs;" but such are not intended here, that set up for Messiahs, whom Christ foretold should arise before the destruction of Jerusalem, *Matt.* xxiv. 24. for that was now over, and those false Christs had arisen and were gone: if this sense could be admitted, Bar Cocab in Adrian's time, bids fair to be the false Christ, or Messiah, in the preceding clause, as the same versions there read; but such as were adversaries of Christ, as the Arabic version renders it, are meant, who set themselves against Christ, and were opposers of his person, incarnation, and office; who either denied that he was the Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, the truth of his incarnation, or his proper deity, or real humanity, such as Ebion, Cerinthus, and others. The apostle might well say there were many, since in his time were the followers of Simon Magus, the Menandrians, Saturnilians, Basilidians, Nicolaites, Gnostics, Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Nazarenes, as reckoned up by Epiphanius. And hence we learn, that antichrist is not one single individual, but many; antichrist in the former clause is explained by antichrists in this; see *1 John* ii. 22. and chapter iv. 1, 3. *2 John* 7. and though the popes of Rome are, by way of eminence, the antichrist that should come, and which those deceivers were the fore-runners of, and paved the way for; yet they are not the only antichrists, there were others before them, and there are many now besides them.

Whereby we know that it is the last time] The pure apostolic age was now going off, with the doctrines, discipline, and worship of it, which was easy to be discerned by the multitude of antichrists which now appeared; and it may well be thought to be the last time, or near the end of things with us, since almost every heresy is revived among us.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

They went out from us] Which intends not the persons

persons that went down from Judea to Antioch, *Acts* xv. 1, 24. who preached destructive doctrines to the Gentiles, which the apostles and the church of Judea, disowned and censured; by which it appeared, that all the preachers of these doctrines were not of them, and of the same mind with them: for this sense makes these antichrists to be only preachers; whereas, though many of them might be such, yet not all; for whoever, in a private capacity denied the Father, and the Son, or that Christ was come in the flesh, was antichrist; and to these, private believers are opposed in the next verse; and it also makes the *us* to be the apostles, whereas they were all dead but John; and these antichrists were men, that had risen up then in the last time, and therefore could not, with propriety, be said to go out from the apostles; besides, whenever the apostle uses this pronoun *us*, he includes with himself all true believers, and may more especially here intend the churches of Asia; or rather the members of the church at Ephesus, where he was; nor is it likely he should have in view the church of Judea, and a case in which that was concerned dear forty years ago: moreover, such a sense makes the going out to be merely local and corporal, and which is in itself not criminal; the persons that went from Judea to Antioch were not blameable for going thither, not for going out from the apostles thither, but for troubling the disciples with words, to the subverting of their souls; nor was a corporal departure from the apostles any evidence of not being of the same mind with them; for they often departed one from other, yet continued of the same mind, and in the same faith: but the sense is, that there were some persons in the apostle John's time, who had made a profession of a religion, were members of the church, and some of them perhaps preachers, and yet they departed from the faith, and dropped their profession of it, and withdrew themselves from the church, or churches to which they belonged, and set up separate assemblies of their own.

But they were not of us] They were of the church, and of the same mind with it, at least in profession, antecedent to their going out; for had they not been in communion with the church, they could not be properly said to go out of it; and if they had not been of the same mind and faith in profession, they could not be said to depart from it; but they were not truly regenerate by the grace of God, and so apparently were not of the number of God's elect: notwithstanding their profession and communion with the church, they were of the world, and not of God;

they were not true believers; they had not that anointing which abides, and from which persons are truly denominated christians, or anointed ones.

For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us] In the doctrine of the apostles, and in the fellowship of the church, as true believers do: if their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained steadfast to him, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and faithful with his saints; for such who are truly regenerate, are born of an incorruptible seed; and those that have received the anointing which makes them truly christians, that abides, as does every true grace, faith, hope, and love; and such who are truly God's elect cannot possibly fall into such errors and heresies, as these did, and be finally deceived, as they were.

But they went out] "They went out from us," so the Syriac version reads.

That they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us] The word *all* is left out in the Syriac version. The defection and apostasy of these persons were permitted by God, that it might appear they had never received the grace of God in truth; and their going out was in such a manner, that it was a certain argument that they were not of the elect; since they became antichrists, denied the deity or sonship of Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, or that he was the Christ, and therefore are said to be of the world, and not of God, *John* v. 22. and chap. iv. 1, 3—6. so that this passage furnishes out no argument against the saints' perseverance, which is confirmed in the following verse.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One] Mean the Spirit, and his graces, with which Christ the head, is anointed without measure; and his members in measure; from whence he is called Christ, and they christians. These were really the Lord's anointed ones; they were true believers; were the wise virgins who had oil in their vessels with their lamps, which would never go out. The grace of the Spirit is called a *chrism*, or anointment, or an anointing, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law; see the note on *Matthew* xxv. 3. of which anointing oil the Jews say (*h*), that continues all of it, *לנצח*, "to time to come," (that is, to the times of the Messiah)

(b) T. Hierogl. Horayot, fol. 47. 3.

as it is said, *Exodus xxx. 31.* Now this these saints had, *from the holy one*; or *that holy one*; meaning, not the holy Spirit of God, though it is true that this anointing, or these graces, were from him; he is the author of them, and may truly be said to anoint with them; nor the Father, who is holy in his nature, and in his works, and is the God of all grace, and is said to anoint the saints too, *2 Cor. i. 21.* but rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is holy, both as God and man, and from whose fulness all grace is had. This oil, or ointment, was first poured on him without measure, and from him it descends to all the members of his mystical body, as the ointment poured on Aaron's head descended to his beard, and to the skirts of his garments; see *Ex. 27.*

And ye know all things] For this anointing is a teaching one; it makes persons of quick understanding; it enlightens their understandings, refreshes their memories, and strengthens all the powers and faculties of the soul; it leads into the knowledge of all spiritual things, into all the mysteries of grace, and truths of the Gospel, into all things necessary for salvation; for these words are not to be taken in the largest sense, in which they are only applicable to the omniscient God, but to be restrained to the subject-matter treated of, and to those things chiefly in which the antichrists, and deceivers erred; and regard not a perfect knowledge, for those that know most of these things, under the influence of this unction, know but in part. The Syriac version reads, "all men," and so refers to that discerning of spirits, of the Spirit of truth, from the spirit of error; a gift which was bestowed on many in the primitive times, by which they could distinguish hypocrites from true believers, and antichrists and deceivers from the faithful ministers of the word. One of Stephens's copies read, "and ye all know."

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

I have not written unto you] Either this epistle, or rather what particularly here regards those apostates from the truth, in order to shun them, and not be deceived by them: the apostle here obviates an objection that he saw might be made upon what he last said, that they knew all things; and if so, why then did he write the things he did, since they knew them before? to which he answers, that he did not write to them as to ignorant, but as to knowing persons.

Because ye know not the truth, but because ye know

it] The Father, who is the God of truth; Christ, who is truth itself; and the Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth; and the Gospel, which is the word of truth; and the scriptures, which are the scriptures of truth, and from whence truth is to be fetched, and by them to be confirmed and defended; and which, if they had not known, it would have been to no purpose for him to have written to them about the antichrists that were come into the world; and though they did know the truth, it was very proper to put them in remembrance of it, and to establish them in it, against these deceivers, which supposes former knowledge of it.

And that no lie is of the truth] Either springs from it, or is according to it, but just the reverse. The apostle has respect to the errors and heresies of the above apostates, which were flagrant contradictions to the Gospel, and as distant from it, as a lie is to truth; and of such lies, and of those liars he speaks in the next verses. The Arabic version reads, "and that every liar is not of the truth."

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?] Or that very Christ, and true Messiah, who was spoken of by all the prophets, since the beginning of the world, and so much, and so long desired by the Old Testament saints: he that denies that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of the prophets, is not indeed the only liar in the world, but he is the greatest of liars; this is a consummate lie, being opposed to a glaring truth, to a fact clear and indisputable; and which rests not merely on the testimony of Jesus, who is truth itself, and who, in express words, more than once, declared and asserted himself to be the Christ; but all the characters of the Messiah, every thing that is said of him in the prophets, meet in Jesus; and the miracles which were done by him, are flagrant proofs, and undeniable evidences of his being the Christ of God; and all the apostles believed, and were sure that he was Christ, the Son of the living God: to which may be added the testimony of John, who was sent, and came to bear witness of him, and did; and who was a prophet, and a man of great probity and integrity. But there was a greater witness than he, even God himself, by a voice from heaven, bore a testimony to him; and angels, at his incarnation, declared him to be the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord; yea, the devil himself,

himself, who is a liar, and the father of lies in other things, knew and owned Jesus to be the Christ; so that those that deny him are the worst of liars, even worse than the devil himself. This may have regard not only to the Jews, that deny Jesus to be the Messiah, but chiefly to such who went by the name of Christians; who denied either his proper deity, or real humanity, as Ebion and Cerinthus, which was denying him to be the God-man, the Mediator, and Messiah; and is true of all such that deny him in any of his offices, or in things relating to them, as his Gospel, and any of the peculiar doctrines of it, delivered by him, and so deny his prophetic office; or any of his ordinances, institutions, and appointments, as law-giver in his house, and king of saints, and so deny him in his kingly office; or reject him as the alone Saviour, joining their own works with him, in the business of salvation; and oppose his sacrifice and satisfaction, and despise his imputed righteousness, and so deny him in his priestly office. Now these are some of the liars, and these some of the doctrinal lies, which are not of the truth, as in the preceding verse.

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son] That denies the Father of Christ to be the creator of the world, but asserts that it was made by angels, as some ancient heretics did; or that the Father of Christ is not the God of the Old Testament, as Marcion; or that denies that God is the Father of Christ; and that Christ is the Son of God; who will not allow that there is any such relation in nature between them; who affirm that Christ is only the Son of God by adoption, or because of his love to him, or because of his incarnation and resurrection from the dead; or that he is not his true and proper Son, only in a figurative and metaphorical sense; that he is not the natural and eternally begotten Son of God, only by office, and as mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having installed him into an office; or he that denies that these two are distinct from each other, but affirms that the Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father, and so confounds them both, and by confounding both, denies that there are either Father or Son; and all such persons are antichrists, or opposers of Christ.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *be that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

Whosoever denieth the Son] Jesus Christ to be the true, proper, natural, essential, and eternal Son of God.

The same hath not the Father] Or does not hold the Father; or "believe the Father," as the Syriac version renders it; for there cannot be a father without a son; and he that honours not the Son, by owning him as such, honours not the Father; and whatever reflects dishonour on the Son, reflects dishonour on the Father. If Christ is not truly and properly the Son of God, the Father is not truly and properly the Father of Christ; if Christ is only a Son in a figurative and metaphorical sense, the Father is only a father in a figurative and metaphorical sense; if Christ is a son only by office, then the Father is a father only by office, which is monstrously stupid. Such an one does not hold the true doctrine of the Father, and does not appear to have true faith in him, true love unto him, or real interest in him, only by profession.

[*But*] *be that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also*] This clause is left out in many copies, and stands as a supplement in our version; but is in the Alexandrian copy, in four of Beza's manuscripts, and in some others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and confirms, and illustrates what is before said; for as he that denies the sonship of Christ, cannot hold the paternity of God, so he that owns the sonship of Christ, the second person, maintains the paternity of the first; for these two are correlates, and mutually put, or take away each other: no mention is made of the Spirit, because, as yet, no controversy had risen concerning him.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

Let that therefore abide in you] Meaning the word of God, *1. 14.* the Gospel of Christ, which there was reason to believe had a place in their hearts, and which they had embraced and professed; and therefore the apostle exhorts them to perseverance in it; and particularly not to let go the doctrine concerning the Father and the Son, and this their relation to each other, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the distinct personality of Father, Son, and Spirit; the contrary to which leaves the three without either name, or distinction from each other: the arguments to enforce this exhortation follow,

Which ye have heard from the beginning] They had heard it not externally only, but internally; they had hearkened to it, and from the heart obeyed.

obeyed it; they had mixed it with faith, and received the love of it; they had heard it from the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear-witnesses of the word; and this they had heard at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, at the first of their conversion: the apostles of Christ began their ministry with the sonship of Christ, and greatly insisted on it, in it, and required a profession of it before baptism, and which was made in order to it; and these believers had been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, as standing in such a relation to each other; see *Acts* ix. 20. and chap. viii. 37. *Matt.* xxviii. 19. and therefore ought not to relinquish this truth, and receive a new and upstart notion: and for further encouragement to continue in it, it is added,

If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father] As those that are once in either always will; what is here said is not either the cause or condition of men being in the Father, and in the Son, or of their continuance in them, but is descriptive of the persons that are in them, and is an open and manifest evidence of their being and continuance in them. Such are in union with Christ, and at times enjoy sensible communion with him, and shall never be finally and totally removed from it; they are in the love of Christ, from whence there is no separation, and in the arms and hands of Christ, out of which none can pluck them; and they abide by him in the exercise of faith and love, and cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, and will hold on and out, professing his name to the end; and they are, and abide in the love of God the Father, which is from everlasting to everlasting; and in the covenant of his grace, which is sure and inviolable; and in the participation of all the blessings and promises of it, among which, the following one, eternal life, is a principal one.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even eternal life.*

And this is the promise that he hath promised us] Either God the Father, who is that God that cannot lie, who in the covenant of his grace, before the world began, made this promise unto his people,

Even eternal life] Which promise, with all others, was put into the hands of Christ, where, with them, it is yea and amen; and also the thing itself promised, where it is hid, and lies safe and secure: or the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised it in the Gospel; for this is the sum of the Gospel-declaration, that whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life; and this lies in

the knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and in the enjoyment of them, and conformity to them; wherefore the doctrine respecting them ought to be retained, and firmly adhered to.

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you,

These things have I written unto you] The little children, who were most likely to be imposed upon by antichrists and deceivers.

Concerning them that seduce you] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "for them that seduce you;" not that they were actually seduced and carried away with the error of the wicked; for though God's elect may be staggered and waver, and be tost to and fro by false teachers, and their doctrines, yet they cannot be totally and finally deceived: but the sense is, these men endeavoured to seduce them; they lay in wait to deceive, and attempted to deceive them, by walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully; and therefore, that they might be known, and so shunned and avoided, the apostle points them out, and shews who they are; that they are such who deny that Jesus is the Christ, and do not own neither the Father nor the Son; in doing which he acted the part of a tender father, a faithful shepherd, and a careful monitor.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

But the anointing which ye have received of him] The Spirit, and the grace of the Spirit, which they had received out of the fulness of grace which is in Christ; and is compared to oil or ointment; see the note on *1*. 20. for Christ, the anointed, is the fountain of it all, and it is had from him in a way of giving and receiving. So the second Sephirah, or number in the Jews Cabalistic tree, which is wisdom, has for one of its surnames, the fountain of the oil of unction (*i*): this

Abideth in you] The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "if it abideth," which spoils the text, for the words are not conditional but affirmative; grace is an internal thing; it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and where it once is, it abides; as

does every grace of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, and every other: grace can never be taken away; God will not take it away, where he has once bestowed it, and men and devils cannot; it can never be lost as to the principle and being of it; it is an incorruptible seed, and a living principle, which can never be destroyed, notwithstanding all the corruptions in a man's heart, the pollutions of the world, and the temptations of Satan.

And ye need not that any man teach you] Not that they were perfect in knowledge, for no man is absolutely, only comparatively so, in this life; or that they needed not, and was above and exempt from the instructions of Christ's faithful servants; for John himself taught them, and to teach and instruct them was the end of his writing this epistle to them; but the sense is, either that they needed not the teachings of these men before-mentioned, the antichrists, liars, and seducers, being better taught, and having an unction by which they knew all things; or they needed not to be taught as if they were babes in Christ, as unskilful in the word of righteousness, but so as to increase in spiritual knowledge, and go on to perfection, and be established in the present truth, at least so as to be put in remembrance of them; or rather, they needed not, nor were they to regard any mere human revelation and doctrine, for the whole Gospel was come by Jesus Christ, and no other is to be expected or received by men, nor any doctrine but what is according to the revelation of Christ; wherefore saints under the Gospel-dispensation are taught of God, by his Spirit, according to the word of truth, and by the ministry of it, and have no need of learning every man from his neighbour, or from his brother, any separate revelation; so that this passage does not militate against the external ministry of the Gospel, or human teachings according to that perfect rule and declaration of the whole mind and will of God by Christ under the Gospel-dispensation.

But as the same anointing] The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "his anointing;" that is God's or Christ's; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that unction which is of God;" meaning the same as before: the Ethiopic version renders it, "his Spirit," which, though not a true version, is no improper or impertinent sense of the phrase: and this

Teacheth you of all things] Truths and doctrines necessary to salvation, as in *1. 20.*

And is truth, and is no lie] Or true, and not a liar; which is a just character of the Spirit of truth, in opposition to the spirit of error; and

holds good of the grace of the Spirit, which is truth in the inward parts, and is genuine and sincere.

And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him] In Christ, from whom they received this anointing, see the note on *1. 24.* or in the anointing itself, in the grace of the Spirit, in which they stood. Some versions read in the imperative, "abide in him, or it," as in the following verse.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

And now, little children, abide in him] The apostle having finished his separate instructions and exhortations to the fathers, young men, and children, returns to the whole body of the saints in general, whom he addresses, as in *1. 1, 12.* under the name of little children; see the note on *1. 1.* and whom he exhorts to abide in Christ, that is, in the exercise of faith on him, of hope in him, and love to him; and to hold to him the head, and to hold fast his word and Gospel, and abide by his truth and ordinances, and adhere to his cause and interest, and not to be moved away on any consideration; to which the following encouragement is given.

That when he shall appear] That is Christ, who is now hid, and out of the sight of bodily eyes, is in heaven, at the right hand of God; but ere long he will appear a second time, and not only to those that look for him, but even every eye shall see him; and his appearance will be a glorious one, and his saints shall appear in glory with him, and shall be like him, and see him as he is.

We may have confidence] Boldness, or freedom, as now at the throne of grace, so then at the throne of judgment; where the saints will stand with courage and intrepidity, when the wicked will flee to the rocks and mountains, being filled with amazement, terror, and trembling.

And not be ashamed before him at his coming] They will not be put to shame by him; nor will they be ashamed of their confidence, faith, hope, and expectation; their hope will not make them ashamed, for they will now enjoy what they hoped for; and, notwithstanding all their sins and infirmities, they will not be ashamed, for they will have on the wedding-garment, the righteousness of Christ, and will stand before the throne without fault, spot, or blemish; nor will Christ be ashamed of them who have not been ashamed of him.

him and his words, but have confessed him, and have been faithful unto death, and have cleaved to him and his cause with full purpose of heart to the end. Some think, ministers of the Gospel are here meant, who, when those that are under their care abide faithful, and persevere to the end, will give up their account with joy; and will have what they have expressed confidence in, and will have their expectations answered, and not disappointed, by having such souls as their joy and crown of rejoicing.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

If ye know that he is righteous] That is, Christ, who is righteous, as God, in his nature and in his works; and as man, in his obedience, life, and conversation; and as mediator, in faithfully discharging the work he undertook; and is the author of an everlasting righteousness, which is imputed by God, revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith; all which they knew, for this is not said as doubting, but rather as taking it for granted that they did know it; *if*, or *seeing ye know*, &c. then it follows:

Ye know] Or *know ye*; ye may assure yourselves,

That every one that doeth righteousness] Not merely works of righteousness, especially in order to justify him before God; for such an one is so far from being born of God, or born again, that he is manifestly in a state of nature, and of opposition to, and enmity against God; he is not subject to him, he does not submit to the righteousness of God, but goes about to establish his own, and betrays his ignorance and want of grace; but it intends such an one who with the heart believes unto righteousness, and lays hold by faith, and lives upon the righteousness of Christ for justification; and who performs good works in faith, and from a principle of love, not to obtain a justifying righteousness, but because he is justified by the righteousness of Christ: and such an one

Is born of him] Either of God, or rather of Christ; being regenerated by his Spirit, having his grace implanted in him, as appears by his faith in his righteousness, and by his works of righteousness, as fruits of faith; and having his image instamped on him, and he himself formed in him, and so made like unto him; by all which it is evident, he is one of his spiritual seed and offspring. The Syriac version reads, "is of him;" belongs to him, is one of his; and this makes

way for what is said of adoption in the following chapter, and which should begin here.

C H A P. III.

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to a holy life and conversation in general, and to the exercise of brotherly love in particular. The former of these is urged from the consideration of the great blessing of adoption, which springs from the free love and favour of God, is unknown to the men of the world, and indeed, in the present state of things, does not appear to the saints themselves in all its fulness and advantages, as it will do in the future state, when the children of God will be like to Christ, and see him as he is; the hope of which should engage them to purity of life and conversation, *†*. 1—3. and this is further enforced from the nature of sin, which is a transgression of the law, *†*. 4. from the end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, which was to take away sin, and who was without it, *†*. 5. from communion with Christ, expressed by abiding in him, seeing and knowing him, which such must be strangers to, that live a sinful course of life, *†*. 6. from this, that only such that do righteousness are righteous persons, and these are righteous as Christ is, *†*. 7. and from a man's being of the devil, that is of a vicious conversation, who was a sinner from the beginning, and whose works Christ was manifested in the flesh to destroy, *†*. 8. and from the nature of the new man, or that which is born of God, which is not to sin, nor can it, *†*. 9. and from the distinction there is between the children of God and the children of the devil, those not being of God who do not righteousness, nor love their brethren, *†*. 10. from hence the apostle passes to brotherly love, and excites and engages to that, from its being a message which had been heard from the beginning, *†*. 11. which is illustrated by its contrary in the instance of Cain, who by the instigation of Satan slew his brother, because his works were righteous, and his own were evil, *†*. 12. wherefore, it is no wonder that good men should be hated by the world, who, as Cain, are of the same wicked one, *†*. 13. brotherly love is further urged unto, from its being an evidence of passing from death to life, or of regeneration; whereas he that hates his brother openly continues in a state of death, is a murderer, and so has not eternal life abiding in him, *†*. 14, 15. and from the great instance of Christ's love, in laying down his life for his people, the saints are incited to lay down their lives for one another; to such a pitch does the apostle

apostle carry brotherly love, *ψ. 16.* wherefore, he that is rich, and is incompassionate to his brother in distress, cannot be thought to have the love of God dwelling in him, *ψ. 17.* hence he presses the exhortation to brotherly love, that it be not in profession only, but true, real, and cordial, *ψ. 18.* and that by observing the advantages of it, as that hereby men know they are of the truth, and can assure their hearts before God; and which is illustrated by the contrary, the condemnation of the heart, *ψ. 19, 20.* the advantages of non-condemnation of the heart are confidence before God, and receiving whatsoever we ask of him; the reason of which is, because his commandments are kept, and things done which are pleasing to him, *ψ. 21, 22.* the commandments are explained of faith in Christ, and love to one another, *ψ. 23.* and the happiness of them that do them is, that Christ dwells in them, and they in him, the evidence of which is, the Spirit that is given unto them, *ψ. 24.*

BEhold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Behold, what manner of love] See, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment, and observe, how great a favour, what an instance of matchless love, what a wonderful blessing of grace,

The father hath bestowed upon us] The Father of Christ, and the Father of us in Christ, who hath adopted us into his family, and regenerated us by his grace, and hath freely given us the new name.

That we should be called the sons of God] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version add, "and we are, or be;" and the Ethiopic version, "and have been;" for it is not a mere name that is bestowed, but the thing itself in reality; and in the Hebrew language, *to be called*, and *to be*, are terms synonymous, see *Isa. ix. 6. Hosea i. 10.* in what sense the saints are the sons of God, see the note on *Gal. iv. 6.* this blessing comes not by nature, nor by merit, but by grace, the grace of adoption; which is of persons unto an inheritance they have no legal right unto; the spring of it is the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, for there was no need on the adopter's side, he having an only-begotten and beloved Son, and no worth and loveliness in the adopted, they being by nature children of wrath; it is a privilege that exceeds

all others, and is attended with many; so that it is no wonder the apostle breaks out in this pathetic manner, and calls upon the saints to view it with admiration and thankfulness.

Therefore the world knoweth us not] That is, the greater part of the world, the world that lies in wickedness, the men of the world, who have their portion in this life, whom the god of this world has blinded, and who only mind the things of the world, and are as when they came into it, and have their conversation according to the course of it; these do not know the saints are the sons of God; the new name of sons is what no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it; they do not own the saints as theirs, as belonging to them, but reckon them as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; nor do they love them, and that because they are not their own, but hate them and persecute them: the reason is,

Because it knew him not] Neither the Father, whose sons they are, and who has bestowed the grace upon them; wherefore they know not, and disown and persecute his children; see *John xvii. 25.* and chapters *xv. 21.* and *xvi. 3.* nor the Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, the first-born among many brethren; who, though he made the world, and was in it, was not known by it, but was hated, abused, and persecuted; and therefore it need not seem strange that the saints, who are the sons of God by adoption, should be treated in like manner.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God] By adoption, secretly in God's predestination, and in the covenant of grace; and openly in regeneration, through faith in Christ, and by the testimony of the Spirit.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be] Though they are sons, they do not appear now as such, as they will do, when they shall be introduced into their father's house, and into the many mansions there prepared for them; when Christ shall publicly own them as the children given unto him, and when they shall be put into the possession of the inheritance they are heirs of; besides, they will appear then not only to be kings sons, but kings themselves, as they now are; they will then inherit the kingdom prepared for them, and will sit down on a throne of glory, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory put upon them; and will appear not only perfectly

fectly justified, their sins being not to be found, and the sentence of justification afresh pronounced, and they placed out of the reach of all condemnation; but they will be perfectly holy and free from all sin, and perfectly knowing and glorious; they have a right to glory now, and glory is preparing for them, and they for that; and they are now representatively glorified in Christ, but then they will be personally glorified: now, though all this shall certainly be, yet it does not now manifestly appear; it appears to God, who calls things that are not as though they were; and to Christ, whose delights were with the sons of men, these children of God, before the world was, and saw them in all the glory they were to be brought to; but not even to angels, until they are owned and confessed before them; much less to the world, who do not know what they are now, and still less what they will be, seeing them now in poverty, meanness, under many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions; and even this does not appear to the saints themselves, whose life is a hidden life; and that by reason of darkness, desertion, and diffidence, for want of more knowledge, and from the nature of the happiness itself, which is at present unseen.

But we know that, when he shall appear] That is Jesus Christ, who is now in heaven, and out of sight, but will appear a second time; the time when, is not known, but the thing itself is certain.

We shall be like him] In body, fashioned like to his glorious body, in immortality and incorruption, in power, in glory, and spirituality, in a freedom from all imperfections, sorrows, afflictions, and death; and in soul, which likeness will lie in perfect knowledge of divine things, and in complete holiness.

For we shall see him as he is] In his human nature, with the eyes of the body, and in his glorious person, with the eyes of the understanding; not by faith as now, but by sight; not through ordinances, as in the present state, but through those beams of light and glory darting from him, with which the saints will be irradiated; and this sight, as it is now exceeding desirable, will be unspeakably glorious, delightful, and ravishing, soul-satisfying, free from all darkness and error, and interruption; will assimilate and transform into his image and likeness, and be for ever. Philo the Jew observes (A), that Israel may be interpreted one that sees God; but adds, *οὐκ οἶος θεοῦ ο θεος*, "not what God is," for this is impossible: it is indeed impossible to see him essen-

tially as he is, or so as to comprehend his nature, being, and perfections; but then the saints in heaven will see God and Christ as they are, and as much as they are to be seen by creatures; God will be seen as he is in Christ; and Christ will be seen as he is in himself, both in his divine and human natures, as much as can be, or can be desired to be seen and known of him.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

And every man that hath this hope in him] Or on him, Jesus Christ; for a true hope of that eternal happiness, which lies in likeness to Christ, and in the vision of him, is only founded on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and this hope every man has not, only he who is born again; for this grace is implanted in regeneration, when men are of abundant mercy begotten unto it, and have it bestowed upon them as a free-grace-gift; and which is of great service to them both in life and in death; and among the rest it has this influence and effect upon them, that every such person that has it,

Purifieth himself, even as he is pure] Not that any man can purify or cleanse himself from sin, this is only owing to the grace of God and blood of Christ; nor that any man can be so pure and holy as Christ is, who is free from all sin, both original and actual; but this must be understood either of a man that has faith and hope in Christ, dealing by these with the blood of Christ for purity and cleansing, with whom and which these graces are conversant for such purposes; or of such a person's imitating of Christ in the holiness of his life and conversation, making him his pattern and example, studying to walk as he walked; to which he is the more excited and stimulated by the hope he has of being a son of God, a dear child of his, and therefore ought to be a follower of him, and walk as Christ walked, in humility, love, patience, and in other acts of holiness; and by the hope he has of being like unto him, and with him in the other world to all eternity: but then this *as* is only expressive of some degree of likeness and similitude, and not perfect equality, which is not to be expected in this, or in the world to come; believers indeed who have faith and hope in the justifying righteousness of Christ, may, and should consider themselves pure and righteous, and free from sin, as Christ is; being clothed upon with his robe of righteousness, in which they stand without fault before the throne, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but this does not seem to be the sense of the place here, the argument being to engage the saints to purity

(A) De Praemiis & Poenae, p. 917.

purity and holiness of life and conversation, from the consideration of the great love of God bestowed upon them in their adoption, and from their hope of eternal happiness, as the context shews; see 2 Cor. vii. 1. other arguments follow.

4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Whosoever committeth sin] This, in connection with what follows, is true of any sin, great or small, but here designs a course of sinning, a wilful, obstinate persisting in sin.

Transgresseth also the law] Not of man, unless the law of men is founded on, and agrees with the law of God, for sometimes to transgress the laws of men is no sin, and to obey them would be criminal; but the law of God, and that not the ceremonial law, which was now abolished, and therefore to neglect it, or go contrary to it, was not sinful; but the moral law, and every precept of it, which regards love to God or to our neighbour, and which may be transgressed in thought, word, and deed; and he that committeth sin transgresses it in one or all of these ways, of which the law accuses and convicts, and for it pronounces guilty before God, and curses and condemns; and this therefore is an argument against sinning, because it is against the law of God, which is holy, just and good, and contains the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is agreeable to his nature and perfections; so that sin is ultimately against God himself.

For sin is the transgression of the law] And whatever is a transgression of the law, is sin; the law requires a conformity of nature and actions to it, and where there is a want of either, it is a breach of it; it is concerned with the will and affections, the inclinations and desires of the mind, as well as the outward actions of life; concupiscence or lust is a violation of the law, as well as actual sin; and especially a course of sinning both in heart, lip, and life, is a continued transgression of it, and exposes to its curse and condemnation, and to the wrath of God; and is inconsistent with a true hope of being the sons and heirs of God: but then the transgression of what is not the law of God, whether the traditions of the elders among the Jews, or the ordinances of men among Papists, Pagans, and Turks, or any other, is no sin, nor should affect the consciences of men.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

And ye know that he was manifested] This is a truth of the Gospel the saints were well instructed in and acquainted with; that Jesus Christ, the word and Son of God, who is here meant, who was with the Father, and lay in his bosom from all eternity, was in the fulness of time made manifest in the flesh, or human nature, by assuming it into union with his divine person; in which he came and dwelt among men, and became visible to them: the end of which manifestation was,

To take away our sins] As the antitype of the scape-goat, making reconciliation and satisfaction for them, through the sacrifice of himself; which was doing what the blood of bulls and goats, or any legal sacrifices or moral performances could never do: and this he did by taking the sins of his people upon himself, by carrying them up to the cross, and there bearing them, with all the punishment due unto them, in his body; by removing them quite away, and utterly destroying them, finishing and making an end of them; and by causing them to pass away from them, from off their consciences, through the application of his blood by his Spirit.

And in him is no sin] Neither original, nor actual; no sin inherent; there was sin imputed to him, but none in him, nor done by him; and hence he became a fit person to be a sacrifice for the sins of others, and by his unblemished sacrifice to take them away; and answered the typical sacrifices under the law, which were to be without spot and blemish: and this shews that he did not offer himself for any sins of his own, for there were none in him, but for the sins of others; and which consideration therefore, is a strong dissuasive from sinning, and as such, is mentioned by the apostle; for, since sin is of such a nature that nothing could atone for it but the blood and sacrifice of Christ, an innocent, as well as a divine person, it should be abhorred by us; and since Christ has taken it away by the sacrifice of himself, it should not be continued and encouraged by us; and since in him is no sin, we ought to imitate him in purity of life and conversation; the end of Christ's bearing our sins was, that we might live unto righteousness, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and his love herein should constrain us to obedience to him: so the Jews (*1*) speak of a man after the image of God, and who is the mystery of the name *Jebovah*; and in that man, they say, there

(1) Sepher Tikkanim, fol. 112. 3. apud Ritangel, de ver. Rel. Christ. p. 68.

is no sin, neither shall death rule over him; and this is that which is said, *Psalms v. 4. neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Whosoever abideth in him] As the branch in the vine, deriving all light, life, grace, holiness, wisdom, strength, joy, peace, and comfort from Christ; or dwells in him by faith, enjoys communion with him as a fruit of union to him; and stands fast in him, being rooted and grounded in him, and abides by him, his truths and ordinances, takes up his rest, and places his security in him, and perseveres through him.

Sinneth not] Not that he has no sin in him, or lives without sin, but he does not live in sin, nor give up himself to a vicious course of life; for this would be inconsistent with the dwelling in Christ, and enjoying communion with him.

Whosoever sinneth] Which is not to be understood of a single action, but of a course of sinning.

Hath not seen him, neither known him] That is, he has never seen Christ with an eye of faith; he has never truly and spiritually seen the glory, beauty, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, his need, and the worth of him; he has never seen him so as to enjoy him, and have communion with him; for what communion hath Christ with Belial, or light with darkness, or righteousness with unrighteousness? nor has he ever savingly known him, or been experimentally acquainted with him; for though he may profess to know him in words, he denies him in works.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Little children, let no man deceive you] Neither by false doctrines, nor by wicked practices, drawing into the belief of the one, or into the performance of the other; suggesting, as the Gnostics did, that knowledge without practice was enough, and that it was no matter how a man lived, provided his notions of the Gospel were right.

He that doeth righteousness is righteous] Not that any man is made righteous by the works of the law, or by his obedience to the law of works, for this is contrary to the express word of God; and besides, the best righteousness of man is imperfect, and can never constitute or denominate him

righteous before God; and was he justified by it, it would not only lay a foundation for boasting in him, which ought not to be, but would make the death, the sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, to be in vain; men are only made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out, which is revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith, and which God imputes without works; so that he that doth righteousness is he that being convinced of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and of the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, renounces his own, and submits to his; who lays hold upon it, receives it, and exercises faith on it, as his justifying righteousness; and in consequence of this, lives, lives in a course of holiness and righteousness, in opposition to, and distinction from one that commits sin, or lives a sinful course of life; which, though it does not make him righteous in the sight of God, yet it shews him to be righteous in the sight of men, and proves that faith to be right which lays hold on the righteousness of Christ, by which he is truly righteous.

Even as he is righteous] As Christ himself is righteous; and so the Syriac version reads; not as personal, or as he is personally and essentially righteous as God; but as mystical, every member of his body being clothed with the same robe of righteousness the whole body of Christ is, and indeed justified by the same righteousness that he as mediator was, when he rose from the dead, as the representative of his people: moreover, as Christ shewed himself to be righteous as man, by doing good, so believers in him, by imitating him, and walking as he walked, shew themselves to be good and righteous, like, though not equal to him; for as a tree is known by its fruits, so is a good man by his good works, and a righteous man by doing righteousness; and as good fruit does not make a good tree, but shews it to be good, so good works do not make a good man, nor a man's own righteousness make him a righteous man, but shew him to be so.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

He that committeth sin is of the devil] Not every one that sins, or commits acts of sin, then every man is of the devil, because no man lives without the commission of sin; but he who makes sin his constant business, and the employment of his life, whose life is a continued series of sinning, he is of the

the devil; not as to origin and substance, or by proper generation, as some have literally understood the words; but by imitation, being like him, and so of him their father, doing his lusts, living continually in sin, as he does, and so resemble him, as children do their parents; and hereby also appear to be under his government and influence, to be led captive by him at his will, and so to belong to him, and such as will have their part and portion with him in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so living and dying.

For the devil sinneth from the beginning] Not of his creation, for he was made by God a pure and holy creature; but from the beginning of the world, or near it, at least from the beginning of man's creation; for he not only sinned by rebelling against God himself, and by drawing in the rest of the apostate angels into the rebellion with him, but by tempting man as soon as created, to sin against God: what was his first and particular sin is not certain, whether pride or envy, or what; it seems to be, his not abiding in the truth, or an opposition to the truth of the Gospel, respecting the incarnation of the Son of God, mentioned in the following clause; see *John* viii. 44. however he has been continually sinning ever since: he *sinneth*; he is always sinning, doing nothing else but sin; so that he that lives a vicious course of life is like him, and manifestly of him.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested] In human nature, as in *1*. 5. whence it appears that he was the Son of God before his incarnation, and so not by it: he did not become so through it, nor was he denominated such on account of it; he was not made the Son of God by it, but was manifested in it what he was before; and for this end,

That he might destroy the works of the devil] And the devil himself, and all his dominion and power, and particularly his power over death, and death itself; and especially the sins of men, which are the works of the devil, which he puts them upon, influences them to do, and takes delight in; and which are destroyed by Christ, by his sacrifice and death, being taken, carried, removed away, finished, and made an end of by him; see the note on *1*. 5.

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Whosoever is born of God] In a figurative and

spiritual sense; who are regenerated, or born from above; who are quickened by the grace of God, and have Christ formed in them; who are made partakers of the divine nature, and new creatures in Christ; which spiritual birth is not owing to men, to the power and will of men, but to the grace of God; and is sometimes ascribed to the Father, who of his own will and abundant mercy begets souls again to a lively hope, and saves them by the washing of regeneration; and sometimes to Christ, who quickens whom he will, whose grace is implanted, and image instamped in it, and by whose resurrection from the dead men are begotten again; and chiefly to the Spirit of God, who is the author of regeneration, and of the whole of sanctification: and such as are born of him are alive through him, the Spirit of life entering into them, and live to God and upon Christ, and breathe after divine and spiritual things, and have their senses to discern them; they see, hear, feel, taste, and savour them; and desire the sincere milk of the word, for their nourishment and growth and have every grace implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love: and of every such an one it is said he

Doth not commit sin] Does not make it his trade and business; it is not the constant course of his life; he does not live and walk in sin, or give up himself to it; he is not without the being of it in him, or free from acts of sin in his life and conversation, but he does not so commit it, as to be the servant of it, a slave unto it, or to continue in it; and that for this reason.

For his seed remaineth in him] Not the word of God, or the Gospel, though that is a seed which is sown by the ministers of it, and blessed by God, and by which he regenerates his people; and which having a place in their hearts, becomes the engrafted word, and there abides, nor can it be rooted out; where it powerfully teaches to avoid sin, is an antidote against it, and a preservative from it: nor the holy Spirit of God, though he is the author of the new birth, and the principle of all grace; and where he once is, he always abides; and through the power of his grace believers prevail against sin, and mortify the deeds of the body, and live: but rather the grace of the Spirit, the internal principle of grace in the soul, the new nature, or new man formed in the soul is meant; which feminally contains all grace in it, and which, like seed, springs up and gradually increases, and always abides; and is pure and incorruptible, and neither sins itself, nor encourages sin, but opposes, checks, and prevents it.

And he cannot sin] Not that it is impossible for such

such a man to do acts of sin, or that it is possible for him to live without sin; for the words are not to be understood in the sense of those who plead for perfection in this life; for though the saints have perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves; they are not impeccable, they are not free from sin, neither from the being nor actings of it; sin is in them, lives in them, dwells in them, hinders all the good, and does all the mischief it can; or in such sense, as if the sins of believers were not sins; for though they are pardoned and expiated, and they are justified from them, yet they do not cease to be sins; they are equally contrary to the nature, will, and law of God, as well as the sins of others; and are oftentimes attended with more aggravated circumstances, and which God in a fatherly way takes notice of, and chastises for, and on the account of which he hides his face from them: nor does the phrase intend any particular single sin, which cannot be committed, though there are such, as sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, or denying Christ to be the Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin, and hatred of a christian brother as such, and sinning the sin unto death, or the unpardonable sin; neither of which can be committed by a regenerate man: nor is the meaning only, though it is a sense that will very well bear, and agrees with the context, that such persons cannot sin as unregenerate men do; that is, live in a continued course of sinning, and with pleasure, and without reluctance, and so as to lie in it, as the whole world does; but rather the meaning is, he that is born of God, as he is born of God, or that which is born of God in him, the new man, or new creature, cannot sin; for that is pure and holy; there is nothing sinful in it, nor can any thing that is sinful come out of it, or be done by it; it is the workmanship of the holy Spirit of God; it is a good work, and well-pleasing in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin with delight; and an incorruptible seed, which neither corrupts, nor is corrupted; and though it is as yet an imperfect work, it is not impure: the reason of the impeccability of the regenerate man, as such, is,

Because he is born of God] For that which is born of God in him, does, under the influence of the Spirit, power, and grace of God, preserve him from the temptations of Satan, the pollutions of the world, and the corruptions of his own heart; see 1 John v. 18. which the Vulgate Latin version there renders, "the generation of God," meaning regeneration, or that which is born of God, "preserveth him:" this furnishes out a considerable argument for the perseverance of the saints.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: who-soever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

In this the children of God are manifest] By regenerating grace, and not sinning, in the sense before explained, in consequence of it: adoption is an act of God's grace and sovereign will; it is secret in his own heart, and is secured in divine predestination, and in the covenant of grace, and is antecedent to regeneration: regeneration and faith do not make men the children of God, but manifest them to be so; adoption makes them the children of God, and intitles them to the inheritance; regeneration gives them the nature of the children of God, and makes them meet for it, and manifests their right unto it; not to the men of the world, but to themselves and other saints.

And the children of the devil] Such as imitate him, do his will and his lusts, and are openly under his power and influence; these are distinguishable from regenerate persons, and the children of God by their lives and conversations; so the people of the nations of the world are called, בני, "the children of Samael," and the serpent, by the Jews (m), which are with them the names of the devil.

Who-soever doth not righteousness is not of God] That is, he does not appear to be born of God, who does not by faith lay hold on the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; and who does not do works of righteousness in faith from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; for where regenerating grace is, there will be such graces and such practices.

Neither he that loveth not his brother] For as he that loveth God, and Christ, and the brethren, appears manifestly to be born again, and to have passed from death to life, so that he does not, is in darkness, in a state of unregeneracy, and walks and continues therein; for was he born again, he would be taught of God to love the saints; see 1 John iv. 7. and chapters iii. 14. and ii. 11.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

For this is the message] Sent from God by Christ,

(m) Raza Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 21.

Christ, or what he in his ministry declared, and is the commandment which was so frequently urged by him, *John* xiii. 34. and chapter xv. 12, 17.

That ye have heard from the beginning] Of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; see chap. ii. 7.

That we should love one another] To which the command of Christ, the reason with which it is enforced, and the early notice of it should engage.

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Not as Cain] That is, let us not be like him, or do as he did, hate the brethren. The apostle illustrates brotherly love by its contrary, in the instance of Cain, who was the first instance and example of hatred of the brethren, and of fratricide, and a very detestable one, by which he would dissuade from so vile and abominable a practice.

Who was of that wicked one] Satan, a child of his, an imitator of him, one that appeared to be under his influence, and to belong unto him. So the Jews say of Cain (*n*), that "he was of the side of the serpent, (the old serpent the devil)" and as the way of the serpent is to slay and to kill, so Cain immediately became a murderer." And again, "because Cain came from the side of the angel of death, he slew his brother (*o*);" though they say that he afterwards repented, and became worthy of paradise (*p*).

And slew his brother] See *Gen.* iv. 8. According to the tradition of the Jews (*q*), he struck a stone into his forehead, and killed him.

And wherefore slew he him?] What was the cause and occasion of it? what moved him to it?

Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous] Or "his work," as the Ethiopic version reads: the sacrifice which he offered up, which, though it was not evil as to the matter and substance of it, yet was so, being offered with an evil mind, and with an hypocritical heart, and without faith in the sacrifice of Christ, and so was unacceptable to God; whereas on the other hand, the sacrifice his brother brought was offered up in the faith of Christ, by which he obtained

a testimony that he was righteous, and that the work he did was a righteous work, being done in faith, and so was acceptable to God; which Cain perceiving, was filled with envy, and this put him upon killing him. The Jews (*r*) relate the occasion of it after this manner; "Cain said to Abel his brother, Come, and let us go out into the open field; and when they were both out in the open field, Cain answered and said to Abel his brother, there is no judgment, nor judge, nor another world; neither will a good reward be given to the righteous, nor vengeance be taken on the wicked; neither was the world created in mercy, nor is it governed in mercy: or why is thy offering kindly accepted, and mine is not kindly accepted? Abel answered and said to Cain, there is judgment, and there is a judge, and there is another world; and there are gifts of a good reward to the righteous, and vengeance will be taken on the wicked; and the world was created in mercy, and in mercy it is governed, for according to the fruit of good works it is governed; because that my works are better than thine, my offering is kindly accepted; and thine is not kindly accepted; and they both strove together in the field, and Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." In the Hebrew text in *Gen.* iv. 8. there is an extraordinary large pause, as if a discourse of his kind, which passed between the two brothers, was to be inserted. Philo the Jew says (*s*), that in the contention or dispute between Cain and Abel, Abel attributed all things to God, and Cain ascribed every thing to himself; so that the controversy was about grace and works, as now; and as then Cain hated his brother upon this account, so now carnal men hate and persecute the saints, because they will not allow their works to be the cause of justification and salvation: and from hence also it may be observed, that a work may be, as to the matter of it, good, and yet as to its circumstances, and the end and view of it, evil.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

By *the world* is meant the inhabitants of the world, the wicked part of them; these hate the saints, though without a cause, any just cause, and for no other reason, but because they are chosen and called out of the world, and do not live the wicked life they do: and this hatred of theirs

(*) Midrash Ruth in Zohar in *Gen.* fol. 42. 4.
in *ibid.* fol. 43. 1. (p) *Ibid.* fol. 42. 1. 2.
Jon. in *Gen.* iv. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 21.

(o) Zohar
(q) Targum

(r) Targum Hieros. & Jon. in *Gen.* iv. 8.
Petos. p. 161.

(s) Quod Des.

theirs is not at all to be wondered at; so it was from the beginning, and has been in all ages since; immediately upon the fall there was enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, which shewed itself in Cain, the instance just given, who hated and murdered his righteous brother; Ishmael that was born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, that was born after the Spirit; and as it was then, it is now, the Jews persecuted the prophets of old, and hated Christ, and his apostles. This is the common lot of all the saints, of all that will live godly in Christ Jesus; and therefore it should not be reckoned a strange and unusual thing; it always was so, even from the beginning, as soon as ever there were two sorts of persons, good and bad, righteous and wicked. This is a corollary or conclusion drawn from the above instance of Cain.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

We know that we have passed from death unto life] From a death in sin, a moral or spiritual death; which lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a loss of the image of God, of righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, in which man was created; in a privation of all true sense of sin, and in a servitude to it, which is unto death, and is no other than death; and from a legal death, or death in a law sense, under the sentence of which all men are, as considered in Adam; and which God's elect are sensible of, when convinced by the Spirit of God, and are in their own apprehension as dead men. Now in regeneration, which is a quickening of sinners dead in sin, a resurrection of them from the dead, the people of God pass from this death of sin, and the law, to a life of sanctification, having principles of grace and life implanted in them; and to a life of justification, and of faith on Christ, as the Lord their righteousness; and to a life of communion with Christ; and to such a life as is to the glory of Christ; and to a right to eternal life. And this passing from the one to the other, is not of themselves, it is not their own act; no man can quicken himself, or raise himself from the dead; in this men are passive: and so the words are rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, "we know that we are translated;" that is, by God the Father, who delivers from the power of darkness, and death, and translates into the kingdom of his dear Son, which is a state of light and life; or by Christ, who is

the resurrection and the life, who is the author of the resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace; or by the Spirit of life from Christ, by whom souls are quickened, and of whom they are born again: and this passage from death to life, or regeneration, is a thing that may be, and is known by the regenerate man; who, as he knows surely, that whereas he was blind he now sees, so that whereas he was dead in sin, he is now alive; and among other things it may be known by this,

Because we love the brethren] This is not the cause of passing from death to life, but the effect of it, and so an evidence of it, or that by which it is known; brotherly love being what the saints are taught of God in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God, and is what true faith works by, and is what shews itself as soon as any thing in a regenerate man; nor can any one love the saints, as such, as brethren in Christ, unless he is born again; a man may indeed love a saint, as a natural relative, as a good neighbour, and because he has done him some good offices, and because of some excellent qualities in him, as a man of learning, sense, candour, civility, &c. though he has not the grace of God; but to love him as a child of God, a member of Christ, and because he has his image instamped on him, no man can do this, unless he has received the grace of God; so that this is a certain evidence of it.

He that loveth not his brother abideth in death] In the death of sin, in a state of nature and unregeneracy; under the sentence of condemnation and death; and he is liable to eternal death, which is the wages of sin, under the power of which, such a man manifestly is. This is said to deter from hatred, as also what follows.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer] A soul-murderer, as the Ethiopic version renders it; not only of himself, for every sinner, by sinning, wrongs and destroys his own soul; but of his brother whom he hates: he is a murderer of him in his heart, even as he that lusts after a woman hath committed adultery with her in his heart, out of which arise murders, as well as adulteries; it is not only taking away life, but also causeless anger, malice, and hatred, that is a breach of the sixth command; see *Matt. v. 21, 22, 28.* and chapter xv. 19.

And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him] He has not the grace of life, or the

the beginning of eternal life in him; he has no meetness for it, being unregenerate; and no right unto it, being unrighteous; nor has he the earnest and pledge of it, being destitute of the Spirit of God; all which a regenerate man has, and has them abiding in him: not but that the sin of murder may be forgiven; a man guilty of it may truly repent, and have pardoning grace applied unto him, and enjoy eternal life, through the grace of the Spirit, and the blood and righteousness of Christ; but without these he is so far from having eternal life, that he is not only punishable with a corporal death, according to the laws of God and man, but is exposed unto, and will die the second, or an eternal death.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Hereby perceive we the love of God] The phrase of God is not in the Oriental versions, nor in the Greek copies, but is in the Complutensian edition, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, "by this we know his love to us;" and so the Ethiopic version, "by this we know his love." That is, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, the mighty God, the true God, and God over all, blessed for ever. His love is manifested to his people, and perceived by them in various instances; but in nothing it is more clearly seen, than in the following one.

Because he laid down his life for us] Of the life of Christ, and his laying it down in the room of his people, see the note on *John* xv. 13. which shews his love, his free grace and favour; for this arose not from any merit, or worth in the persons he died for; not from their love, loveliness, or duty, but from his rich mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved them; and which, though it cannot be equalled, should be imitated.

And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren] Not in such sense, or for such ends and purposes, as Christ laid down his life for us; for no man, as by giving his money, so by laying down his life, can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him: but the meaning is, that saints ought to risque their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren, when they are called to it, and the case requires it; as Priscilla and Aquila laid down their necks, or ventured their lives for the apostle Paul, *Romans*

xvi. 3, 4. and they should also, when called unto it, freely lay down their lives in the cause of Christ, and for the sake of his Gospel, for the gaining of souls to Christ, and for the confirming of the faith of the brethren in him, as the apostles of Christ, and the martyrs of Jesus, have done; this is an argument for brotherly love in the highest instance of it, taken from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, than which nothing is more forcible, or can lay a greater obligation on the saints.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

But whoso hath this world's good] The possessions of this world, worldly substance, the temporal good things of it; for there are some things in it, which are honestly, pleasantly, and profitably good, when used lawfully, and not abused; otherwise they are to the owner's hurt: or *the living of this world*; that which the men of the world give up themselves to, are bent upon, and pursue after; or on which men live, and by which life is maintained, and preserved, and made comfortable in the present state of things; such as meat, drink, apparel, money, houses, lands, &c. The Ethiopic version renders it, "he that hath the government of this world;" as if it pointed at a person that is in some high office of worldly honour and profit, and is both great and rich; but the words are not to be restrained to such an one only, but refer to any man that has any share of the outward enjoyments of life; that has not only a competency for himself and family, but something to spare, and especially that has an affluence of worldly substance; but of him that has not, it is not required; for what a man distributes ought to be his own, and not another's, and in proportion to what he has, or according to his ability.

And seeth his brother have need] Meaning, not merely a brother in that strict and natural relation, or bond of consanguinity; though such an one in distress ought to be, in the first place, regarded, for no man should hide himself from, overlook and neglect his own flesh and blood; but any, and every man, "his neighbour;" as the Ethiopic version reads, whom he ought to love as himself; and especially a brother in a spiritual relation, or one that is of the household of faith; if he has need; that is, is naked and destitute of daily food, has not the common supplies of life, and what nature requires; and also, whose circumstances

are low and mean, though not reduced to the utmost extremity; and if he sees him in this distress with his own eyes, or if he knows it, hears of it, and is made acquainted with it, otherwise he cannot be blame-worthy for not relieving him.

And shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him] Hardens his heart, turns away his eyes, and shuts his hand; has no tenderness in him for, nor sympathy with his distressed brother, nor gives him any succour: and this shews, that when relief is given, it should be not in a morose and churlish manner, with reflection and reproach, but with affection and pity; and where there is neither one nor the other,

How dwelleth the love of God in him ?] Neither the love with which God loves men; for if this was shed abroad in him, and had a place, and dwelt in him, and he was properly affected with it, it would warm his heart, and loosen his affections, and cause his bowels to move to his poor brother: not the love with which God is loved; for if he do not love his brother whom he sees in distress, how should he love the invisible God? chapter iv. 20. nor that love which God requires of him, which is to love his neighbour as himself.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue] Which though it holds good of love to God, and to Jesus Christ, yet here is to be understood of love to the brethren, as the context shews; and so the Syriac version reads, "let us not love one another in word, &c." that is, without the heart, or with a double heart; speaking one thing with the lip, and designing another thing in the heart; speaking peaceably with the mouth, and with the heart laying wait; or we should not love in this manner only; and so the Arabic version of De Dieu adds. It is very lawful and right to express our love to one another, and to all men in words, to give good words, and use courteous language, and speak in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, and especially to persons in distress; but this should not be all, it will be of no avail to say to such, be warmed and filled, and give them nothing, but these good words, nothing to warm and fill them with; see James ii. 15, 16.

But in deed and in truth] For true love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labour of love; it shews itself by the saints serving one another, in spirituals; as

by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; exhorting each other to the duties of religion, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonish in love, and restore with meekness; and in temporals, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving in deed, or in work; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is in truth, when it is in reality, and not in shew only; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and without grudging.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth] By the saints loving one another in deed and in truth, they know, as the cause is known by the effect, that they are of God, who is the true God, the God of truth, and cannot lie, and is truth itself; that they are the children of God, and are born of him, since they love those that are, and every like loves it like; and that they are of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; that they belong to him, are his, since they have his Spirit, as appears by his fruits in them, and this, among the rest, love to the brethren; and that they are his disciples, which others, even all men know, as well as themselves, by their mutual brotherly love; and that they are of the Gospel, which is truth, and the word of truth; that they are begotten, and born again, according to the will and grace of God by it, and are on the side of it, and can do nothing against, but all for it; and that they are true, sincere, and upright persons, true believers in Christ; whose faith works by love, and are real lovers of him, and his, since they love not in word only, but in deed, and in truth.

And shall assure our hearts before him] Or persuade our hearts; arrive to a full assurance of faith, hope, and understanding, that we are of the truth, do belong to God, are loved by him with an everlasting love, are chosen by him unto salvation, and are his adopted and regenerated ones, having passed from death to life, of which brotherly love is a sure evidence, 1. 14. Some render the words, "shall pacify, or make our hearts tranquil, or quiet;" this only the blood of Christ can do, and does, being sprinkled on the conscience: he only has a quiet mind, or true peace of conscience, that looks to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and deals with his blood for the full and free

free remission of his sins: it is true indeed, that one that loves his brother heartily and sincerely, has peace of mind in it, though not for it; when, on the other hand, there is no peace to the wicked man, that hates his brother; for where there is envying, malice, hatred, and strife, there is no true peace, pleasure, and comfort, but confusion, uneasiness, distraction, and every evil work. Or this passage may refer to that holy confidence before God, which true believers in Christ, and cordial lovers of the brethren have; both now at the throne of grace, where they can come with boldness, intrepidity, and freedom, to ask for what they want, and confidently believe they shall receive what is proper and needful for them; and also hereafter, at the throne of judgment, and in the day of judgment, when they shall have boldness, and not be ashamed before the judge at his coming; who will particularly take notice of their love in feeding, clothing, and visiting the least of his brethren, which he takes as done to himself.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

For if our heart condemn us] Of want of love to the brethren, and of hypocrisy in it, as well as of any other sin; for the conscience, which is meant by the heart here, is accuser, witness and judge; it accuses of the evil of sin, and is as good as a thousand witnesses; and upon its own testimony pronounces guilty, and condemns.

God is greater than our heart] Or he is the maker of it, and he has the power over it, and the management of it; it is in his hands, and to be turned by him as he pleases; and he is the searcher and trier of it; and besides, is a swifter witness than conscience, and a superior judge unto it.

And knoweth all things] That are in the heart; the principles of actions, and all the actions of men, for which their hearts condemn them; and all the sinfulness in them, and the aggravations of them; wherefore, as he knows them more perfectly, he judges of them more exactly, and will reprove more sharply, and condemn more severely for them: hence, if the condemnation of mens hearts and consciences be so very great, as sometimes to be intolerable and insupportable, what will be the righteous judgment, and dreadful condemnation of God? how fearful a thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God? this sense is confirmed by the Syriac version rendering it, "how much greater is God than our hearts:"

there is another sense given by some, which is not by way of terror, but comfort, and that is, that if the hearts of believers accuse, reprove, and condemn for sin through unbelief, or want of clear view of pardon and righteousness by Christ, God is greater, as in power, so in knowledge, than the hearts of men; and he knows the thoughts he has towards them, which are of peace, and not of evil; the covenant he has made with his Son, of which he is ever mindful; and what his Son has done, that he has made full satisfaction for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; so that let sin, or Satan, or the world, or the law, or their own hearts condemn them, there is no condemnation of any avail unto them. But the former sense seems best to agree with the context.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not] Which must be understood, not of a stupidity of mind, as is in unregenerate men, who have no sense of sin, no sorrow for it, or remorse of conscience on account of it; or as is in them who are past feeling; having their consciences seared as with a red-hot iron; such cannot be intitled to the advantages that follow; nor is it of such persons the apostle speaks, but of himself, and other christians, the beloved of the Lord, and one another, who had an experience of the grace of God upon their souls, and made a profession of religion: nor does it design such a purity of heart and life in believers, as that their hearts do not smite, reproach, and condemn them for sin at any time, for such a state of perfection is not to be attained to, and expected in this life; but rather a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, or an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by that blood, which speaks peace and pardon, so that there is no more conscience of sin, for the removal of which that is applied; and this gives boldness and confidence at the throne of grace: though it is best of all to confine it to the case of brotherly love; for the sense is not, if our heart condemn us not of any thing but of the want of brotherly love, or insincerity in it.

Then have we confidence toward God] Or with him, at the throne of his grace: such can draw nigh to him, and stand before him with an holy and humble confidence, when such as hate the brethren, as Cain did, in whom the apostle instances, and those that go in his way cannot; whose heart condemned him, his conscience smote him, and he went from the presence of the Lord; but those that love the brethren have confidence

of their relation to God; by this they know their regeneration, and by that their adoption, and so that they are the children of God; and can therefore draw nigh to God as their father, and call him so; they can come with an holy boldness and intrepidity of mind before him, and use a *παρρησία*, freedom of speech with him; can tell him all their mind, pour out their souls unto him, and lay before him their case and wants; they have confidence of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to supply their need, and fulfil all his promises to them, and that their prayers will be heard, answered, and regarded by him in his own time.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him] According to his promise, *Matt. vii. 7.* that is, whatever is asked according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, and for his sake, and in faith, nothing wavering, but believing in God, in his covenant and promises, for these are proviso's in the case; and such as ask in this way may exercise an holy confidence that they shall receive; and indeed they do receive what they ask for; see *1 John v. 14. John xiv. 13, 14. Matt. xxi. 22.*

Because we keep his commandments] Not that keeping the commands of God is the meritorious cause of receiving any thing from him; for when men have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants in point of merit: whatever is received from God, as it is in consequence of asking, so it is entirely owing to his own grace and favour, and for the sake of Christ; but keeping the commands of God is a necessary adjunct, or, as Calvin on the text calls it, an inseparable accident, or what necessarily belongs unto, and enters into the character of such, who are heard and answered by God, and receive at his hands; for there is a great deal of truth in what the Jews say to the blind man, *John ix. 31.* and which may serve as a comment on these words.

And do those things that are pleasing in his sight] As keeping of his commandments is; not that these things ingratiate into the love and favour of God, or are the causes and conditions of it, for the love of God is prior to any thing of this kind; nor are they the causes of mens acceptance with God, for the acceptance both of persons and services is only in Christ the beloved; but these things are what God approves of, when done in faith, from

a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: and since he hears such persons that are worshippers of him, and do his will, and has promised good things to them; this is therefore a reason strengthening their confidence in him, that what they ask, they shall receive.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And this is his commandment] Having mentioned the keeping of the commandments of God, the apostle proceeds to shew what they are; that they are faith in Christ, and love to one another; which two are reduced to one, because they are inseparable; where the one is, the other is; faith works by love.

That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ] Christ is the object of faith, and he is so, as he is Jesus, a saviour; faith deals with him as such, and will have no other saviour but he: and now to believe in him, is not merely to believe that he is the Son of God, the true Messiah, the saviour of the world, that he is come in the flesh, has suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead, is ascended into heaven, and is set down at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people, and will come again to judge the quick and dead; but it is to go forth in special and spiritual acts upon him, such as looking at him, coming to him, venturing on him, trusting in him for life and salvation, committing all into his hands, and expecting all from him. And this is called a *commandment*, and comes under the notion of one; not that it is properly a law, or belongs to the law; for faith in Christ Jesus is a fruit of electing grace, and a blessing of the covenant of grace; it is the free gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and is peculiar to the elect of God, and sheep of Christ; and so cannot belong to the law of works; but, as the Hebrew words, *חורו*, and *קצו*, both signify any doctrine, and instruction in general; see *Psalms xix. 7, 8.* so the word here used designs an evangelical doctrine, a divine instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, which declares that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and so the word is used for a doctrine in this epistle, chap. ii. 7. and that of the next command or doctrine, which follows.

And love one another, as he gave us commandment] That is, as Christ taught and instructed his disciples, *John xiii. 34.* and chap. xv. 12, 17.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby

hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And he that keepeth his commandments] Attends to those instructions and declarations concerning faith in Christ, and love to the brethren, and acts according to them.

Dwelleth in him, and he in him] That is, he dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in him; the same is said of believing in Christ under the figurative expressions of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, in *John vi. 56.* see the note there.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us] Or *dwelleth in us*, as before,

By the Spirit which he hath given us] Which if understood of private christians, as the preceding verses incline to, the sense is, that union to Christ, and the continuance of it, or his indwelling as a fruit of union, and the permanency of that, are evidenced by the Spirit of God; who is given in consequence of union and relation to Christ, as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, of faith, and love, of adoption, and as the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; but if of the apostles and ministers of the word, it may regard the gifts of the holy Spirit bestowed on them, fitting them for their work and office, and who is a Spirit of truth, and not of error; and by having and enjoying these, they knew that Christ abode in them, and had reason to believe, according to his promise, that he would be with them, and with his ministering servants in succession, to the end of the world; and this sense seems to be encouraged by the former part of the following chapter.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apostle cautions against seducing spirits; advises to try them, and gives rules by which they may be known, and by which they are distinguished from others; and then returns to his favourite subject, brotherly love. He exhorts the saints not to believe every man that came with a doctrine to them, but to try them, since there were many false teachers in the world; and gives a rule by which they may be tried and judged, as that whatever teacher owns Christ to be come in the flesh, is of God, but he that does not, is not of God, but is the spirit of antichrist that should come, and was in the world, *ŷ. 1, 2.* but for the comfort of those to whom he writes, he observes, that they were of God, and had overcome these false teachers, through the mighty power of the divine Spirit in them, who is greater than Satan, and all his emissaries, *ŷ. 4.* he dis-

tinguishes between seducing spirits, and faithful ministers of the word; the former are of the world, speak of worldly things, and worldly men hear them; but the latter are of God, and they that have any spiritual knowledge of God hear them; but such as are not of God, do not hear them, by which may be known the spirit of truth from the spirit of error, *ŷ. 5, 6.* And then the apostle returns to his former exhortation, to brotherly love, which he enforces by the following reasons, because it is of God, a fruit of his Spirit and grace, and because it is an evidence of being born of God, and of having a true knowledge of him; whereas he that is destitute of it does not know him, seeing God is love, *ŷ. 7, 8.* and having affirmed that God is love, he proves it, by the mission of his Son, to be a propitiation for the sins of such that did not love him, and that they might live through him; wherefore he argues, that if God had such a love to men, so undeserving of it, then the saints ought to love one another, *ŷ. 9—11.* Other arguments follow, engaging to it, as that God is invisible; and if he is to be loved, then certainly his people, who are visible; and that such who love one another, God dwells in them, and his love is perfected in them; and that he dwells in them, is known by the gift of his Spirit to them, *ŷ. 12, 13.* and that God the Father so loved the world, as to send his Son to be the Saviour of it, before asserted, is confirmed by the apostles, who were eye-witnesses of it; who also declare, that whoever confesses the Sonship of Christ, God dwells in him, and he in God; and who had an assurance of the love of God to them, who is love itself; so that he that dwells in God, and God in him, dwells in love, *ŷ. 14—16.* And great are the advantages arising from hence, for hereby the saints love to God is made perfect; they have boldness in the day of judgment, since as he is, so are they in this world, and fear is cast out by it, *ŷ. 17, 18.* but lest too much should be thought to be ascribed to love, that is said to be owing to the love of God to them, which is prior to theirs to him, and the reason of it, *ŷ. 19.* And the chapter is closed with observing the contradiction there is between a profession of love to God, and hatred of the brethren, seeing God, who is invisible, cannot be loved, if brethren that are seen are hated; and also the commandment, that he that loves God should love his brother also, *ŷ. 20, 21.*

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:

God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Beloved, believe not every spirit] The apostle having mentioned the word *spirit* in the latter part of the preceding chapter, takes an occasion from thence to return to what he had been suggesting in the second chapter, concerning the many antichrists that then were, and whom he points out, and here cautions against. By *every spirit* he means, either every doctrine that is pretended to come from the Spirit of God, or every teacher, who professes to be qualified and sent by him, and to have his light, knowledge, and doctrine from him. Every true minister of the Gospel has the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, more or less, to qualify him for his work; he is separated, and called to it by him, and receives his spiritual light and knowledge from him; it is he that teaches him sound doctrine, and leads him into all truth, as it is in Jesus, and brings every necessary truth to his remembrance; and who succeeds his ministrations to the good of souls: but there are some who call themselves the ministers of the Gospel, who, though they may have some natural abilities, and a share of human learning, and a notional knowledge of things, yet have never received either grace or gifts from the Spirit; nor have they been ever called by him; nor are their ministrations according to that divine word which is inspired by him, nor attended with his demonstration and power; wherefore, though some professing to have the Spirit of Christ are to be believed, yet not every one; and though the Spirit is not to be quenched in any, nor prophesying to be despised, yet care should be taken what is heard and received: some persons are so obstinate and incredulous as not to believe any thing that is declared, be the evidence what it will; as the Jews would not believe Christ and his apostles, though what they said agreed with Moses and the prophets, and was confirmed by miracles; and others are too credulous; at once receive every teacher, and embrace every upstart doctrine: this they should not do,

But try the spirits whether they are of God] Not by human reason, especially as carnal and unsanctified; for though the doctrines of the Gospel are not contrary to true reason, they are above it, and not to be judged of by it, and are disapproved of, and rejected by carnal reason; but by the word of God, which is the standard of all doctrine; and whatever agrees with that, is to be received, and what does not should be rejected. And so to do is very commendable, as appears from the instance of the Bereans, who on this

account are said to be more noble than those of Thessalonica, *Acts* xvii. 11. and from the commendation of the church at Ephesus, *Rev.* ii. 2. And this is what every believer, every private christian should do; to them it belongs to read and search the scriptures, and prove all things, and judge for themselves of the truth of doctrine; and to such a probation or trial of the spirits, spiritual light, knowledge, judgment, sense, experience, and divine guidance are necessary, which should be asked of God, and an increase thereof; and all such diligent searchers, and humble enquirers, are capable of making judgment of persons and doctrines, whether they are from the Spirit of God or not, for the Spirit of God never speaks contrary to his word: and the reason why such a trial should be made, is,

Because many false prophets are gone out into the world] Such who pretended either to a revelation of future things, and to foretell things to come; or rather to a gift of prophesying, or preaching in Christ's name, to be prophets and spiritual men, and ministers of the word, but were false ones; who either predicted what did not come to pass, or rather preached false doctrine, by corrupting the word, and handling it deceitfully, and so imposed upon, and ruined the souls of others, as well as deceived their own: and there were not only one, or two, or a few of these, but many, as our Lord had foretold, *Matt.* xxiv. 11, 24. and which makes the reason the stronger for not believing every spirit, but trying them; and the rather, since they were not sent of God, nor called out by his churches, but were gone out of themselves; of their own heads, and without any mission from God or man: and into the world too; they were in every part of it, and especially where there were any churches of Christ; into which they first crept in privily, and at unawares, but afterwards became public preachers of the word, and then separating from them, set up openly in the world for themselves.

2. Hereby know we the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God] This is a rule by which believers may know, whether a man professing to have the Spirit of God, and to be called and sent by him, and whether the doctrine he preaches is of him or no.

Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God] Or of the Spirit of God; that is, every doctrine which carries this truth in it; or every man that owns, and professes,

esses, and publishes this doctrine concerning Christ, is on the side of God and truth; and which contains several articles in it, respecting the person and office of Christ; as that he existed before he came in the flesh, not in the human nature, or as man, or as an angel, but as the Son of God, as a divine person, being truly and properly God; so that this confession takes in his divine sonship, and proper deity, and also his true and real humanity; that the Messiah was incarnate, against the Jews, and was God and man in one person; and that he was really man, and not in appearance only, against the heretics of those times: and it also includes his offices, as that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah, which the Jews denied, and that he was the anointed prophet, priest, and king; and so is a confession or acknowledgment of all the doctrines of the Gospel, which came by him, as a prophet; and of his satisfaction, sacrifice, and intercession, as a priest; and of all his ordinances and commands as a king; and that he is the only saviour and redeemer of men. Now, whoever owns and declares this system of truth, *is of God*; not that every one that assents unto this, or preaches it, is born of God; a man may believe, and confess all this, as the devils themselves do, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; but the Spirit, or doctrine, which contains these things in it, is certainly of God, or comes from him; or whoever brings these truths with him, and preaches them, he is, so far as he does so, on the side of God and truth, and to be regarded.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

And every spirit that confesseth not] The proper Deity and Sonship of Christ, his true and real humanity, and his Messiahship; or any of his offices, doctrines, and ordinances; or his satisfaction and righteousness; or that peace, pardon, justification, life, and salvation are by him; all which are meant by what follows,

That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh] This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version; and that without hurting the sense, since it is easily supplied from the preceding verse; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, only read *Jesus*; and the latter reads the whole thus, "and every spirit that dissolves Jesus;" that separates the two natures, human and divine, in him, and makes two persons of them; or denies either of

them, either that he is truly God, or really man, or denies him to be Jesus, the Saviour; who, as much as in him lies, destroys his person, office, and work, and makes void his obedience, sufferings, and death.

Is not of God] Neither he, nor his doctrine are of God; his doctrine cannot come from God; being contrary to the word of God; and he himself is neither born of God, nor on his side.

And this is that spirit of antichrist] Who is against Christ, or opposes himself to him; as he who denies his sonship, his deity, his humanity, his offices, and his grace, manifestly does; every doctrine that is calculated against these truths, is the spirit and doctrine of antichrist.

Whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world] In the false teachers, the fore-runners of antichrist; see the note on chapter ii. 18.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Ye are of God, little children] This, with what follows, is said for the comfort of the saints, and to deliver them from the fears of being drawn aside by the delusions of the false prophets, and antichrists; since they belonged to God, were his elect, and therefore could not be finally and totally seduced; they were the children of God by adopting grace, and could not become the servants of men; they were born of God, and so were kept by the power of God unto salvation, as all that are begotten unto a lively hope are; they were enlightened by the spirit of God, and had a discerning of truth from error, and therefore could not be imposed upon.

And have overcome them] The false prophets, being in a good cause, fighting the good fight of faith, and having good weapons, particularly, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and invincible arguments from thence; and also gracious assistance from the Spirit of God, who gives a mouth that none can shut, and wisdom that none can resist; as well as an inward experience of the truth, and power of Gospel doctrines; a testimony within themselves, which will stand the whole shock and opposition of the enemy: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "and have overcome him;" antichrist, whose spirit was then in the world; or the world itself, or Satan, the god of the world; and so the Ethiopic version reads, "and have overcome the evil one," as in chapter ii. 13, 14. the reason of which victory, and

and which adds to the comfort and support of saints in their present warfare, is,

Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world] By *he that is in the world* is meant, either the devil, the prince and god of the world, and who goes up and down in it, dwells in the hearts of the men of it, under whose influence they are, and in whom he works effectually; or antichrist, whose spirit was now in the world, and whose doctrine was propagated by the false teachers, in whom he began to appear; but he that is in the saints, either God who dwells in them, and they in him, *1. 15.* is mightier than the man of sin, and his emissaries, to keep and preserve from all corruptions, and every false way; or Christ, who dwells in their hearts by faith, and is stronger than the strong man armed, and able to save and deliver out of his hands; or the Spirit of God; and so the Arabic version reads, "the Spirit that is in you;" who is in the saints, as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a Spirit of adoption, and the earnest of their inheritance; he is able to carry on the work of grace in them, and finish it, and will do it; and he, as a Spirit of truth, is more powerful than the spirit of error; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, or pours in a flood of errors and heresies, he lifts up a standard against him; causes him to fly, and secures the saints from being carried away with it: compare with this the Septuagint version of *Psalms cxxiv. 1, 2.* *if it had not been the Lord who was on our side;* which render it thus, "if the Lord had not been in us."

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

They are of the world] That is, the false prophets and teachers that were gone out into the world, and had the spirit of antichrist in them; these were as they were when they came into the world, under the pollution, guilt, and dominion of sin, in a state of unregeneracy, carnality, and darkness; they properly belonged unto it, and walked after the course of it, and were under the influence of the god of it, who led them into error; and were sensual, and indulged themselves in worldly lusts, and were seeking after worldly things; supposed that gain was godliness, and had many persons in admiration because of advantage; their nature and disposition, their principles and practices, and their ends and views, were worldly; and were quite different from Christ and his apostles, *John xvii. 14, 16.*

Therefore speak they of the world] They speak

the wisdom of the world, or that in which the world thinks wisdom lies, and cry up for true knowledge, and right principles; and this they do with the enticing words of man's wisdom, or in words which man's wisdom teacheth; speaking great swelling words of vanity, which take with vain and carnal minds; and preach doctrines suited to their own taste, and the taste of others, as carnal and worldly men; such as the purity of human nature, in its first conception and birth, its freedom from any original corruption, and from any concern with the sin of Adam, only with actual sin of its own; and the power of it to do that which is good, keep the law of God, and obtain his favour; the non-necessity of any internal work of efficacious grace, a reformation of life and manners, being thought sufficient to render a man acceptable to God, and prepare him for eternal happiness; the doctrine of justification and salvation by works; all which are pleasing to carnal men: hence it follows,

And the world beareth them] The wicked of the world; worldly and unregenerate men attend on their ministry, approve of what they deliver, and receive it with pleasure, and believe it: this expresses both the quality of the hearers of false teachers, that they are that part of the world, the worse part of it, which lies in wickedness; and the quantity of them, the greater part of the world, as it was foretold by Christ, and his apostles, that they should deceive many, that many should follow their pernicious ways, and that they should draw many disciples after them; wherefore the numbers that attend such persons, as it need not be wondered at, since both preachers and hearers, and the doctrines preached and heard, are all alike, they are of the world, so it should not be stumbling to the people of God.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

We are of God] Not only as the chosen of God, the children of God, regenerated ones, and believers, but as ministers of the Gospel; they were chosen, and called, and sent of God to preach the Gospel, and were qualified for it, by gifts received from him, and had their doctrine from him, as well as their commission and mission; they were not of the world, and therefore did not speak of the world, nor things suited to worldly men; but being of God, they spoke the words of God, which were agreeable to him, which made for the glory of the three divine persons, and were consistent

consistent with the divine perfections; which maintained the honour and dignity of the persons in the Godhead; which magnified the grace of God in salvation; and debased the creature.

He that knoweth God] Not only as the God of nature and providence, but as in Christ, and that not only professionally, but practically; that has an experimental knowledge of him, that knows him, as exercising loving kindness, having tasted of his grace and goodness; that knows him so as to trust in him, and love him; for such a knowledge of God is meant, as has true real affection to him joined with it; so that it is he that loves his name, his glory, his truths, and his ordinances: he

Hearst us] Not only externally, constantly attending on the ministry of the word, as such do; but internally, understanding what is heard, receiving it in love, cordially embracing it, and firmly believing it, and acting according to it.

He that is not of God] Who is not born of God, but is as he was when born into the world, and is of it; and who does not righteousness, nor loves his brother, nor confesses the divinity, humanity, and offices of Christ, and so is not on the side of truth, nor has the truth of grace in him; see chapters iii. 10. and iv. 3. such a man

Hearst not us] He is a mere natural man, a carnal and unregenerate man; and such an one cannot attend on a Gospel ministry, or receive Gospel doctrines, which are with him senseless, stupid, and foolish notions; yea, foolishness itself; nor can he know and understand them through ignorance, and want of a spiritual discerning; they are hard sayings, and he cannot hear, nor bear them; and when this is the case, it is a plain token of unregeneracy, and that such persons are not of God; see *John* viii. 47.

Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error] The difference between truth and error; can distinguish one from another, and discern who are the true ministers of Christ, and who are the false teachers; for not only the word of God, the scriptures of truth, are the test and standard, the touch-stone to bring them to, and try them by; and the doctrines they severally bring shew who they are; but even their very hearers distinguish them. Spirits, or men pretending to the Spirit of God, may be known in a great measure by their followers; they who have the spirit of error, and are of the world, they are followed, and caressed, and applauded by the men of the world, by unregenerate persons; they who have the Spirit of truth, and are of God, they are heard and approved of, and embraced by spiritual men,

Vol. V.

by such who know God in Christ, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious. The Targum of *Isaiah* xxix. 10. is "the Lord hath sent among you *רוח טעות* the spirit of error, and hath hid from you the prophets and scribes, and also the teachers who taught you the doctrine of the law."

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

Beloved, let us love one another] The apostle having finished what he proposed to say concerning the trying of spirits, returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, and which comes with fresh force and strength; for since worldly men follow, hear, embrace, and cleave to the false teachers; such as are of God, and on the side of truth, should love one another, and their faithful ministers, and stand fast in one spirit by the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to every error.

For love is of God] To love one another is the command of God, it is his revealed will, and is well-pleasing in his sight; it comes from him, is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his Spirit, and which he teaches regenerate ones to exercise.

And every one that loveth] God, as the Alexandrian copy reads, or Christ, and the saints, who seem to be particularly meant.

Is born of God] For love to the brethren is an evidence of regeneration; see the note on chapter iii. 14.

And knoweth God] He knows God in Christ, and therefore loves those who have the grace of God in them, and the image of Christ upon them; he knows the mind and will of God, being taught of God to love the brethren; and he knows the love of God, and has had an experience of the grace of God, which influences him to love the saints.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

He that loveth not knoweth not God] If a man loves not the children of God, those that are born of him, he does not know, so as to love, God, the Father of them; for to pretend love to God, the begetter of them, whom he sees not, and not love those who are begotten by him, and are visible objects of respect, is a contradiction, and cannot be reconciled; see *3. 20*. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version, and is transposed in the Syriac version, which reads the text thus, "for God is love, and whoever loveth not, know-

B b b

"eth not God." By which reading, the following reason stands in close connection with *ψ. 7.*

For God is love] He loves himself; there is an entire love between the three divine persons, who are in the strictest, and in the most unconceivable and inexpressible manner affected to each other; their love is natural and essential: God loves all his creatures as such, nor does he hate any of them, as so considered; and he bears an everlasting, unchangeable, and invariable love to his elect in Christ Jesus; of which an instance is given in the following verses, and is a reason why the saints should love one another; that they might be like their heavenly Father, by whom they are begotten, and of whom they are born, and whose children they are; seeing he is love itself, and in his breast is nothing else but love. So the Shekinah is, by the Cabalistic Jews (*1*), called, אהבה, *love*.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us] The love of God here spoken of, and instanced in, is not his general love to all his creatures, which is shown in the make of them, and in the support of them in their beings, and in his providential care of them, and kindness to them; but his special love towards his elect, and which was before it was manifested; it was secretly in his heart from everlasting, and did not begin to be at the mission of Christ into the world, but was then in a most glaring manner manifested: there were several acts of it before, as the choice of them in Christ, the appointment of him to be their favour, and the covenant of grace made with him on their account; these were more secret and hidden; but now the love and kindness of God appeared, broke forth, and shone out in its glory; this is a most flagrant and notorious instance of it, in which it is exceedingly conspicuous; this is a most clear proof, a plain and full demonstration of it.

Because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world] The sender is God the Father, who is distinguished from the Son that is sent; of which act of sending, see the notes on *Rom. viii. 3.* and *Gal. iv. 4.* and for him, who is that God against whom we have sinned, and is that lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to send his Son to be the favour of sinful men, is an amazing instance of

(1) Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 1. & Lex. Cabal. p. 43, 44.

love; and which appears the more manifest, when it is observed that it is *his only begotten Son* that is sent; of which see the note on *John i. 14.* and the place he was sent into is the world, where his people are, and where their sins are committed, he came to expiate; and where he was treated with great indignity and contempt, and suffered many things, and at last death itself: the end of his mission was,

That we might live through him] Who were dead in Adam, dead in sin, and dead in law, and could not quicken themselves; nor obtain eternal life for themselves, by their performances. Christ came, being sent, that they might have life, and that more abundantly than Adam had in innocence, or man lost by the fall; and accordingly they were quickened together with him; when he was quickened, after he had been put to death, they were virtually and representatively quickened and justified in him; and in consequence of his death and resurrection from the dead, they are regenerated and made spiritually alive, and live unto righteousness; and through his righteousness wrought out for them, and imputed to them, they are in a law-sense alive unto God, and alive and comfortable in their own souls, living by faith on Christ, and have a right and title to eternal life; and which they also have through him, and which is chiefly intended here; for the design is not only that they may live spiritually and comfortably here, but eternally hereafter.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Herein is love] The love of God, free love, love that cannot be matched: herein it is manifested, as before; this is a clear evidence of it, an undoubted proof, and puts it out of all question.

Not that we loved God] The love of God is antecedent to the love of his people; it was when theirs were not; when they were without love to him, yea enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and even enmity itself, and therefore was not procured by theirs; but on the contrary, their love to him is caused by his love to them; hence his love, and a continuance in it, do not depend on theirs; nor does it vary according to theirs; wherefore there is good reason to believe it will continue, and never be removed; and this shows the sovereignty and freeness of the love of God, and that it is surprizing and matchless.

But that he loved us] That is, God; and so the Syriac version reads, "but that God himself loved us."

“us.” The Vulgate Latin version adds, “first,” as in γ . 19. the instance of this love follows.

And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins] This is a subordinate end to the other, mentioned in the preceding verse; for, in order that sinful men may possess everlasting life and happiness, it is necessary that their sins be expiated, or atonement be made for them, which is meant by Christ's being a propitiation for them; that the justice of God should be satisfied; that peace and righteousness, or love and justice, should be reconciled together, and kiss each other; and that all obstructions be removed out of the way of the enjoyment of life, which are brought in by sin; and that the wrath of God which sin deserved, be averted or appeased, according to our sense and apprehension of it; for otherwise the love of God to his people is from everlasting, and is unchangeable, and never alters, or never changes from love to wrath, or from wrath to love; nor is the love of God procured by the satisfaction and sacrifice of Christ, which are the effects of it; but hereby the way is laid open for the display of it, and the application of its effects, in a way consistent with the law and justice of God. This phrase is expressive of the great love of Christ to his people, and of his substitution in their room and stead; and so it is used among the Jews for a substitution in the room of others, לרוב אהבה, “to express the greatness of love (u);” see the notes on *Rom.* iii. 25. and chap. ix. 3.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Beloved, if God so loved us] As to send his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and to obtain eternal life for us through his sufferings and death: the apostle uses the same language his lord and master did, *John* iii. 16.

We ought also to love one another] For those who are the objects of God's love, ought to be the objects of ours; and if God has loved our fellow-Christians and brethren to such a degree, as to send his Son to die for them, we ought to love them too; and if we are interested in the same love, the obligation is still the greater; and if God loved them with so great a love, when they did not love him, but were enemies to him, then surely we ought to love them now they are become the friends of God, and ours also; as God loved them freely, and when unlovely, and us likewise in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, then we ought to love, and continue to

love the saints, though there may be something in their temper and conduct disagreeable: God is to be imitated in his love; and his love to us, which is unmerited and matchless, should influence and engage us to the love of the brethren, who have a far greater claim to our love than we can make to the love of God; and which indeed is none at all, but what he is pleased to give us.

12 No man hath seen God at any time.

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

No man hath seen God at any time] The same is said by the Evangelist John, chapter i. 18. but here it is observed with a different view, and upon another account; there it signifies that no man has seen and looked into the counsels and designs of God, and been able to make a discovery and declaration of his mind and will, his love and grace, and which is there ascribed to the Son of God, see the note there; but here the sense is, that whereas God is invisible in his nature, and incomprehensible in his being and perfections, so that there is no coming to him, and seeing of him, and conversing with him in a familiar way, and so not of loving him as he is in himself, and ought to be loved, as one friend sees, converses with, and loves one another, and finds his love increased by sight and conversation; then we ought to love the saints and people of God, who are visible, may be seen, come at, and conversed with, see γ . 20. for this clause stands among the arguments and reasons for brotherly love.

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us] Not as he does in his Son, by union of nature; nor as in heaven, by the displays of his glory; nor as in the whole world, by his omnipresence and power; but by his Spirit, and the communications of his love, and by his gracious presence and communion, which he indulges the saints with; for such who love one another, as they appear to have the Spirit of God, of which that grace is a fruit, so they are by the Spirit built up a fit habitation for God, and by which Spirit he dwells in them; and such may expect the presence of God, for they who live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with them.

And his love is perfected in us] Not that love of God, with which he loves his people; for that admits of no degrees and is not more or less in itself, or in his heart; but is always invariably and unchangeably the same, and is full, complete, and perfect in his own breast, as it was from all eternity; and does not pass by degrees, or gradually rise from a love of benevolence to a love of complacency and delight, or increase as

(*) *Mish. Negaim*, c. 2. $\S$. 1. *Maimon.* & *Bartenora* in *ibid.*
Mish. Sanhedrim, c. 2. $\S$. 1. & *Jarchi* & *Bartenora* in *ibid.* *vid.*
T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & *Succa*, fol. 20. 1.

our love does to him and to one another, on which it has no dependance: nor is this love perfected in the saints in this life; that is to say, they have not perfect knowledge and enjoyment of it; nor have they all the effects of it bestowed upon them, and applied unto them; the perfection of it, in this sense, will be in heaven: but the love with which God is loved is here designed; and it is called his, because he is both the object and the author of it; and this is not perfect as to degrees; yea, sometimes, instead of abounding and increasing, it goes back, it is left, and waxes cold; and it will not have its completion till the saints come to heaven, and then it will be in its full perfection and glory, when faith and hope shall be no more: but the sense is, that this grace of love is sincere and hearty, and without dissimulation; it is unfeigned love; and it is in deed and in truth, and not in word and in tongue only; and this appears to be so, by the love which is shown to the brethren, the children of God; so that love to God in the saints is perfected by love to the brethren, just in such sense as faith is made perfect by works, *James ii. 22.* that is, is made to appear to be genuine, right, and true.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us.] That there is a communion between God and us, and a communication of his love and grace to us, and an exercise of grace upon him; for God dwells in his people by his Spirit and grace, and they dwell in him by the exercise of faith and love upon him: and this is known,

Because he hath given us of his Spirit.] Not of the essence and nature of the Spirit, which is the same with the nature of the Father and of the Son, and is incommunicable; but either of the gifts of the Spirit, which are divided to every man as he pleases, and which being bestowed on men, and used by them, for the profit and advantage of the church of God, show that God is with them, and dwells among them of a truth; or of the graces of the Spirit, such as faith, hope, and love, which are severally the gifts of God; and these being bestowed and exercised, are proofs of the mutual indwelling of God and his people; see the note on chap. iii. 24.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

And we have seen and do testify.] This seems to be particularly said of the apostles, who had a

clear discerning of the love and grace of God, manifested in the mission of Christ into the world; for though no man had seen his nature and his person, yet they had seen his love, and the exceeding riches of his grace, which he had shewn forth in Christ Jesus; and they had also seen Christ, God manifest in the flesh; they had seen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; they had seen him with their bodily eyes; they had seen his works and miracles; they had seen him dying and risen again from the dead, and go up to heaven; they were witnesses, and eye-witnesses of him, and bore a faithful testimony of him, and for him, and particularly set their seal to this truth,

That the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.] Not of every individual person in it, for there are some that will go into everlasting punishment, and even a world that will be condemned; Christ is not in fact the Saviour of all the individuals of human nature, and therefore was not sent to be such; for if he was, the end of his mission is not fully answered; nor of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, and who are chiefly intended by the world; see the note on chapter ii. 2. and even of all the elect of God, stiled his people, his sheep, his friends, his church, and the sons of God; and it may be said of all that believe in him throughout the whole world, without any distinction of nation, age, sex, state or condition: and Christ is the Saviour both of the souls and bodies of these, from all their sins, original and actual; from the power of Satan, the bondage and curse of the law, and wrath to come; and he is the only, able, willing, and complete Saviour, and who saves with an everlasting salvation.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God.] The only begotten of the Father; that he is not a mere man, as the Jews, and Ebion and Cerinthus said, but a divine person, equal with the Father; which contains all that relates to the dignity of his person, and his fitness for his office as a Saviour, and which was the test of faith in those times, and the grand article of belief: not that a bare assent to this had what followed annexed to it; for the devils believed and owned that Jesus was the Son of God; and so might, and did, unregenerate persons, as the centurion at the cross of Christ, who know nothing what communion with God is; but this confession is such as is attended with a believing in Christ from the

the heart unto righteousness, life, and salvation, and a chearful obedience to his ordinances and commands, from a principle of love to him; and faith in him, things not to be found in devils and carnal men; see *Rom. x. 9, 10.*

God dwelleth in him, and he in God] See the note on *ψ. 13.* this should encourage to an open and hearty confession of Christ as the Son of God, and Saviour of sinners, and to a public profession of his name, and faith in him, and an holding it fast without wavering.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

And we have known and believed] Or have a full assurance and knowledge of, and faith in,

The love that God hath to us] Shewn as in many instances, so more especially in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, to be the Saviour of us, and that we might live through him.

God is love] As in *ψ. 8.* see the note there.

And he that dwelleth in love] Who dwells by faith upon the love of God as displayed in Christ, and abides in the exercise of love to God, and to the saints.

Dwelleth in God, and God in him] See the note on *ψ. 13.* the last clause, *and God in him,* is left out in the Syriac version.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

Herein is our love made perfect] Or *love with us*; which some understand of the love of God towards his people, and which is shed abroad in them: this indeed removes all fear of an awful judgment, and renders that amiable and desirable; and such who are interested in it, shall stand in that day with intrepidity and boldness; and this sense may seem to be favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, "his love with us;" and especially by the Vulgate Latin version, which renders it, "the love of God with us:" but it is best to understand it agreeable to the context, of our love to God, which is with, and in our hearts; and which is made, or made to appear to be perfect, true, and genuine, by our love to the brethren; since the love of God to us does not admit of degrees, nor does it, or the reality and sincerity of it, depend upon our love to the saints; see the note on *ψ. 12.*

That we may have boldness in the day of judgment] Not of mens judgment, when brought before judges, governors, and kings, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, and stand at their bar; where saints, who have true love to God and Christ, and the brethren, have stood with great courage and intrepidity, and shown much boldness, and used great freedom of speech; nor of judgment in this life, which sometimes begins at the house of God, though the saints often have great boldness and presence of mind, and freedom of expression both to God and man in a day of affliction, as Job had; but of the future judgment, which, though it will be very awful and solemn, Christ the judge will appear with great majesty and glory, and all men will stand before him, and the books will be opened, and the judgment will proceed with great strictness and justice, and will issue in the everlasting perdition of devils and wicked men, yet the saints will have boldness in it: whilst evil men and devils tremble at the thoughts of it now, they rejoice and are glad; they love it, look for it, long for it, and hasten to it; and will stand fearless, and without the least dread, whilst others will flee to the rocks, and into the holes of the earth; and they will use freedom of speech with Christ, as the word here signifies; they will sing his new song, and ascribe the glory of their salvation to him, and express their praises of him, and love to him, then and to all eternity: and this boldness the saints may be said to arrive at through a perfect, or sincere, and genuine love of the brethren; for by this they know they are born again, and are born to an inheritance incorruptible, which they have both a meetness for, and a right unto; and knowing hereby that they are passed from death to life, they justly conclude they shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are not afraid of the awful judgment: hereby they know that their faith is right, and that therefore they are manifestly the children of God; and if children, then heirs, and so shall be saved, and have everlasting life.

Because as he is, so are we in this world] Which may be understood either of God, to whom the saints are like; for such who are born again, as those who love the brethren are, they are partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to God, even in this present state of things; and as it becomes them to be holy in all manner of conversation, as he is holy, and to be merciful to wicked men, as he is merciful, so to love the saints as he does, and to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgive one another as he for Christ's sake has forgiven them; for as God is love, they should be all love likewise: or of Christ, see chapter iii. 3, 7. and that with respect to God; as he is the Son

Son of God, so are they the sons of God; he by nature, they by grace and adoption; as he is loved by God with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, so are they loved by him with the same kind of love, even whilst they are in this world; and as he is the chosen of God, and precious, so they are chosen in him, and unto salvation by him. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "as he was;" and the sense may be, as he was in this world, so are they; and which may regard not so much likeness in nature, though there is an agreement in that, excepting sin, but the sameness of state and condition; as he was a man of sorrows, attended with afflictions, loaded with reproaches, and followed with the persecutions of men, so are they; nor need they wonder that they are the objects of the world's hatred and contempt, since he was also; as he was tempted by Satan, forsaken by his friends, and deserted by his God, so sometimes are they in this world; and as he went through a variety of sufferings, and death itself, to glory, so through many tribulations do they enter the kingdom: moreover, as he now is in heaven, so are they in this world; even as he is in heaven, so are they representatively in him, whilst in this world; and as he is righteous, being justified and acquitted from all the charge of sin he took upon him, and therefore will appear a second time without sin, so they are completely righteous in him: and once more, as he is, so they are, or should be in this world; they should be holy as he is holy, and be humble, meek, and patient, as he is, and walk as he walked; and particularly love the saints and one another, as he does; and which seems to be greatly intended here, and must be understood not of an equality, but of a likeness. The Arabic version reads the words conditionally, and as depending on the preceding clause, "if as he was, we are in this world;" and then the sense is, that the saints shall have boldness in the day of judgment, provided they are in this world as Christ was.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

There is no fear in love] In the love of the brethren; where that is, there is no fear; so far as that prevails and gains ground, fear removes; not the filial fear of God, the new-covenant grace of fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and is consistent with faith, hope, love, and spiritual joy; but either the fear of men, which brings a

snare: those that truly love Christ, his Gospel, and his people, they are not afraid of men; the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind, is opposite to a spirit of fear, nor can they stand together; and such strength there is sometimes in brotherly love, that the saints are not afraid of death itself, but freely lay down their lives for one another; see chap. iii. 16. or it may be rather, that they are not afraid of the day of judgment, and of hell and damnation; where hatred of the brethren has place, there is a fear and dread of these things, as were in Cain; but those that love the brethren, they know they are passed from death to life, and shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are in no fear of any of these things.

But perfect love casteth out fear] When love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is genuine and sincere, and a man knows that from the bottom of his heart he sincerely loves the saints, he concludes from hence, as he may, the truth of his faith, which works in this way; and this frees him from the fears of men and devils, and of the future judgment, and wrath to come. The Jews have a saying (*w*), "worthy is his portion that rules over the place of fear, for lo there is nothing that rules over the degree of fear but love."

Because fear hath torment] It distresses a man, fills him with anguish, and makes him restless and uneasy, and keeps him in servitude; through the fear of men, of the devil, death, judgment, and hell, he is all his life-time, or as long as this fear lasts, subject to bondage: or "fear has punishment," as it may be rendered, and is by the Vulgate Latin version; it is a punishment itself to a man; and its being criminal, deserves punishment, and is punishable; see Rev. xxi. 8.

He that feareth is not made perfect in love] Or by love; that is, he that is possessed, and under the power of a servile fear of punishment, is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to appear to himself to be a sincere lover of God, and true believer in Christ; for was he, he would not be in fear of destruction and death, since whoever truly loves God, and believes in Christ, shall certainly be saved; though such persons, at times, may not be without their doubts and fears.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Left love to God, and so to one another, should be thought to be of ourselves, and too much be ascribed unto it, the apostle observes, that God's

love

(w) Zohar in Exod. fol. 87. 1.

love to us is prior to our love to him; his love is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting; for he loves his people as he does his Son, and he loved him before the foundation of the world; his choosing them in Christ as early, and blessing them then with all spiritual blessings, the covenant of grace made with Christ from all eternity, the gift of grace to them in him before the world began, and the promise of eternal life to them so soon, shew the antiquity and priority of his love: his love shewn in the mission and gift of his Son, was before theirs, and when they had none to him; and his love in regeneration and conversion is previous to theirs, and is the cause of it; his grace and regeneration brings faith and love with it, and produces them in the heart; and his love shed abroad there, is the moving cause of it, or what draws it first into act and exercise; and the larger the discoveries and applications of the love of God be, the more does love to him increase and abound; and nothing more animates and inflames our love to God, than the consideration of the earliness of his love to us, of its being before ours; which shews that it is free, sovereign, distinguishing, and unmerited. Some read the words as an exhortation, "let us love him;" and others as in the subjunctive mood, "we should love him, because, &c." some copies read, "we love God," and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and the Alexandrian copy read, "because God first loved us;" and so some others.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother] Than which profession, nothing can be more contradictory, not black and white, or hot and cold in the same degree.

He is a liar] It is not truth he speaks, it is a contradiction, and a thing impossible.

For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen] His person, which might have drawn out his affection to him; and something valuable and worthy in him, which might have commanded respect; or his wants and distresses, which should have moved his pity and compassion.

How can he love God whom he hath not seen?] It cannot be thought he should; the thing is not reasonable to suppose; it is not possible he should; see the note on *ψ. 12.*

21 And this commandment have we

from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

And this commandment have we from him] Either "from God," as the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read; and that to love the brethren is a commandment of God, is clear from chapter iii. 23. or from Christ, for it is also a command of his, even his new commandment, which he has given, and his people have received from him.

That he who loveth God love his brother also] See *John* xiii. 34. and chapter xv. 12, 17. which is an argument persuading to attend to the one as well as to the other; for the same command that requires the one, requires the other: and he that transgresses it in one case, is a transgressor of it, as well as in the other.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apostle treats of the nature of faith and love; of Christ the object of both, and of the witness that is bore to him; of the necessity of believing the testimony concerning him; of the confidence of prayer being heard, and concerning whom it should be made; of the happiness of regenerate persons, and of their duty to keep themselves from idols. Faith in Christ is the evidence of regeneration, and where that is, there will be love to the author of regeneration, and to them that are regenerated; and love to them is known by love to God, and keeping his commandments; and keeping the commandments of God, and which are not grievous, is a proof of love to God, *ψ. 1—3.* and whereas every regenerate man overcomes the world, it is by his faith, the evidence of his regeneration, that this victory is obtained; nor can any other man be pointed out that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God, *ψ. 4, 5.* and Christ the Son of God, the object of this victorious faith, is described by his coming by water and blood, of which the Spirit is witness, who is a true one; and six witnesses of the truth of this and of his divine Sonship are produced, three in heaven, the Father, Word, and Spirit, who are the one God, and three on earth, the Spirit, water, and blood, who agree in their testimony, *ψ. 6—8.* wherefore, this testimony concerning the Son of God, ought to be received, since it is the testimony of God, which is greater than that of men; besides, he that believes in Christ has a witness of this in himself, and honours God, whereas he

he that believes not, makes God a liar, not giving credit to his record concerning his Son; the sum of which is, that God has made a grant of eternal life, to some persons, which is in his Son, which those that believe in the Son of God have, but those that do not believe in him have it not: all which shew the necessity of receiving the above testimony; and the ends proposed in writing these things were, to believe in Christ, and that it might be known they had eternal life in him, *ŷ. 9—13.* and from faith in Christ the apostle passes to confidence in prayer, as a particular effect and fruit of it; as, that whatever is asked according to the will of God is heard; and that such who are satisfied of this, that they are heard, may be assured that they have the petitions they desire to have, *ŷ. 14, 15.* and whereas it is one branch of prayer to pray for others as well as for ourselves, the apostle directs who we should pray for; for the brethren in general, and in particular for such who have sinned, but not unto death, and life shall be given to such: but as for those who have sinned unto death, he does not say prayer should be made for them, for though all unrighteousness in general is sin, yet there is a particular sin which is unto death, and is not to be prayed for, *ŷ. 16, 17.* but happy are those who are born of God, for they do not sin this sin; and through the use of the armour of God, and the power of divine grace, they keep themselves from the evil one, and he cannot come at them, to draw them into this sin; also they know that they are of God, and are distinguished from the world, which lies in wickedness; yea, they know that the Son of God is come in the flesh, and hath given them an understanding of the true God, by which they know that they are in him, and in his Son Jesus Christ, who is with him, and the divine Spirit, the one true God, and the author and giver of eternal life, *ŷ. 18—20.* and the chapter, and with it the epistle, is concluded with an exhortation to these regenerate ones, as they had kept themselves from Satan, that they would also keep themselves from idols of all sorts, *ŷ. 21.*

WHosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ Or the Messiah that was prophesied of of old, was long promised to the Jews and whom they expected;

there was a person spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament under this character, *Pŷalm ii. 2. Dan. ix. 25, 26.* and the Jews looked for him; and Jesus of Nazareth is he, as appears by all the characteristics of the Messiah in prophecy being found upon him: this the Jews deny, but is the grand article of faith embraced by the apostles and followers of Jesus, and is of very great importance; he that denies it is a liar, and he that does not believe it shall die in his sins: the word signifies *anointed*, and includes all the offices of the Son of God, to which he was anointed, as prophet, priest, and king; so that to believe him to be the Christ, is to believe him to be that prophet Moses said should come, and who has declared the whole mind and will of his Father; and that he is that priest that should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and make atonement for sin, and intercession for transgressors; and that he is that king whom God has set over his holy hill of Zion, whose laws are to be obeyed, and his commands observed: but to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah, is not barely to give an assent to this truth, or to acknowledge it: so the devils themselves have done, *Luke iv. 41.* and whole nations of men, multitudes of which were never born of God; it is not a mere profession of it before men, or an idle, inoperative faith, which is destitute of love to Christ, and obedience to him; but whereas his work and business, as the Christ of God, was to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to procure the remission of sin, and to make peace and reconciliation for it, and to obtain eternal salvation; true faith in him as the Messiah is a believing with the heart unto righteousness, or a looking to, and trusting in the righteousness of Christ for justification; and a dealing with his blood for pardon and cleansing, under a sense of guilt and filth; and a laying hold on his atoning sacrifice for the expiation of sin, and peace with God; and a reception of him as the only Saviour and Redeemer, or a dependence on him for life and salvation; and which faith shews itself in love to him, and in a professed subjection to his Gospel, and cheerful submission to his ordinances: and every such person

Is born of God] Is a partaker of the divine nature; has Christ formed, and every grace of the Spirit implanted in him, among which faith in Christ is a considerable one; and such an one in consequence is openly a child and heir of God; wherefore, to be born of God is an instance of great grace, and an high honour and privilege, and of the greatest moment and importance. Regeneration is not owing to the power and will of man,

man, but to the abundant mercy and good-will of God, and is an instance of his rich mercy, great love, and free favour, and commands love again.

And every one that loveth him that begat] That is, God the Father, who has begotten them again to a lively hope, according to his abundant mercy and sovereign will; and as he is their Father that has begotten them, they cannot but love him: and such an one

Loveth him also that is begotten of him] Not only Jesus Christ, who by nature is the only-begotten of the Father; for those who know God to be their Father by adoption and regeneration, will love Christ, who is the Son of God by nature; see *John* viii. 42. but also every regenerate person, all that are born of God; since they are the children of the same Father with them, belong to the same household and family, and bear the image and likeness of their heavenly Father on them.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

By this we know that we love the children of God] The Ethiopic version reads, "by this we know that we love God;" which, in connection with what follows, makes a tautology, and is a proving *idem per idem*; whereas the apostle's view is to shew when love to the saints is right; and that is,

When we love God, and keep his commandments] Love to the brethren may arise from such a cause, as may shew that it is not brotherly love, or of a spiritual kind; it may arise from natural relation, or civil friendship, or from a benefit or favour received from them, and from some natural external excellency seen in them; and a man may do acts of love and kindness to the brethren, from what may be called good nature in himself, or with sinister views; but true love to the brethren springs from love to God: such who love the saints aright, and by which they may know they do so, they love them, because they themselves love God, and in obedience to his command; they love them, because they belong to God, and are the objects of his love; because his grace is wrought in them, and his image instamped upon them.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For this the love of God, that we keep his com-
VOL. V.

mandments] Keeping of the commandments of God is an evidence of love to God; this shews, that love is not in word and tongue, in profession only, but in deed and in truth; and that such persons have a sense of the love of God upon their souls, under the influence of which they act; and such shall have, and may expect to have, greater manifestations of the love of God unto them.

And his commandments are not grievous] Heavy, burdensome, and disagreeable; by which are meant, not so much the precepts of the moral law, which through the weakness of the flesh are hard to be kept, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled; though believers indeed being freed from the rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation of the law, delight in it after the inward man, and serve it cheerfully with their Spirit; and still less the commands of the ceremonial law, which were now abolished, and were grievous to be born; but rather those of faith in Christ, and love to the saints, chapter iii. 23. or it may be the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's-supper, with others, which though disagreeable to unregenerate persons, who do not care to be under the yoke of Christ, however easy and light it is, yet are not heavy and burdensome to regenerate ones; and especially when they have the love of God shed abroad in them, the presence of God with them, communion with Jesus Christ, and a supply of grace and strength from him; then are these ways ways of pleasantness and paths of peace, and the tabernacles of the Lord are amiable and lovely.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

For whatsoever is born of God] Which may be understood either of persons born of God; or of the new creature, or principle of grace wrought in them, particularly faith hereafter mentioned, which is an heaven-born grace, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit: this

Overcometh the world] The God of the world, Satan; the lusts which are in the world; false prophets gone forth into the world; and the wicked men of the world, who by temptations, snares, evil doctrines, threatenings, promises, and ill examples, would avert regenerate ones from observing the commands of God; but such are more than conquerors over all these, through Christ that has loved them.

And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions
C c c read,

read, "your faith;" great things, heroic actions, and wonderful victories, are ascribed to faith; see *Heb.* xi. 33, 34. which must not be understood of the grace itself, as separately considered, but of Christ the object of it, as supported, strengthened, assisted, and animated by him; and then it does wonders, when it is enabled to hold Christ, its shield, in its hand against every enemy that opposes.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Who is he that overcometh the world? This question carries in it a strong affirmation, that no other person is the conqueror of the world.

But he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? And this points out what that faith is which obtains the victory over the world; and shews that it is not that trust and confidence which has a man's self, or any mere creature, thing, or person for its object, but only Jesus Christ, and that as he is the Son of God; and which is not a mere assent to such a proposition, to which devils and unregenerate persons may assent, and do; but it is a seeing of the Son in the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his person, office, and grace; a going to him being drawn by the Father; and a living upon him as the Son of God, and trusting in him for life, righteousness, and salvation: and this shews, that the victory over the world is not owing to faith itself, but to its object Christ, who has overcome it, and makes true believers in him more than conquerors over it.

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ? By water is not meant the ablutions or washings of the ceremonial law; Christ came not by these, but to make an end of them; his blood, which cleanseth from all sin, being the antitype, and so the fulfilling end of them: nor the purity of his nature, life, and conversation; though he came into the world, that holy thing which is called the Son of God; and was holy in his nature, and harmless in his life, and did no sin, and so was fit to be a sacrifice for the sins of others: nor does it intend the washing and cleansing of his people from their sins; this is what he came

to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the ordinance of water-baptism is designed; and though Christ did not come baptizing with water, he having a greater baptism to administer, yet that he might be made manifest, John came baptizing in that way; and Christ, as the Son of God, came, or was made manifest by John as such, at the waters of Jordan, and at his baptism; there he was declared to be the Son of God by his Father's voice from heaven.

Not by water only? He did not come by water only, as Moses did, who was drawn out of it, and therefore so called; or as John, who came administering water-baptism externally only.

But by water and blood? By blood as well as water; by which is meant, not the blood of bulls and goats, Christ came to put an end unto, and lay aside the shedding of that blood; but his own blood is intended, and not reconciliation and atonement for the sins of his people, which was what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the sense is, that as at baptism, so at his sufferings and death he was made manifest to be the Son of God; as he was to the centurion and others, that were with him, when they observed the earthquake, and the things that were done; and at his resurrection from the dead he was declared to be the Son of God with power: and this might be seen in the cleansing and atoning virtue of his blood, which is owing to his being the Son of God. There may be here an allusion to the water and blood which came out of his side, when pierced on the cross, which this apostle John was an eye-witness of. Some copies add here, and in the former clause, "and by the Spirit," as the Alexandrian copy, three of Beza's copies, and the Ethiopic version: but it seems unnecessary, since it follows,

And it is the Spirit that beareth witness. By which may be meant, either the Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life, and is so called, because by it the Spirit of God, in his gifts and graces, is received, and which is a testimony of the person, as well as of the offices and grace of Christ; or rather those miraculous works which Christ did by the Spirit, to which he often appeals, as witnesses of his divine Sonship, and equality with the Father, as well as of his being the true Messiah; or else the holy Spirit, who bore testimony to Christ, by his descent on him at his baptism, and upon his apostles at the day of Pentecost, and by attending, succeeding, and confirming the Gospel, which is the testimony of him; and he is elsewhere, as well as here, and in the context spoken of as a witness of Christ, *Acts* v. 32.

Because

Because the Spirit is truth] He is the Spirit of truth, and truth itself; he is essentially truth; his testimony is most true, and firmly to be believed. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "because Christ is the truth."

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost: and these three are one.

For there are three that bear record in heaven] That is, that Jesus is the Son of God. The genuineness of this text has been called in question by some, because it is wanting in the Syriac version, as it also is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and because the old Latin interpreter has it not; and it is not to be found in many Greek manuscripts; nor cited by many of the ancient fathers, even by such who wrote against the Arians, when it might have been of great service to them: to all which it may be replied, that as to the Syriac version, which is the most ancient, and of the greatest consequence, it is but a version, and a defective one. The history of the adulterous woman in the eighth of John, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the book of the Revelation, were formerly wanting in it, till restored from Bishop Usher's copy by De Dieu and Dr Pocock, and who also, from an Eastern copy, has supplied this version with this text. As to the old Latin interpreter, it is certain it is to be seen in many Latin manuscripts of an early date, and stands in the Vulgate Latin edition of the London Polyglot bible; and the Latin translation, which bears the name of Jerom, has it, and who in an epistle of his to Eustochium, prefixed to his translation of these canonical epistles, complains of the omission of it by unfaithful interpreters. And as to its being wanting in some Greek manuscripts, as the Alexandrian, and others, it need only be said, that it is to be found in many others; it is in an old British copy, and in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies; and out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens's, nine of them had it: and as to its not being cited by some of the ancient fathers, this can be no sufficient proof of the spuriousness of it, since it might be in the original copy, though not in the copies used by them, through the carelessness or unfaithfulness of transcribers; or it might be in their copies, and yet not cited by them, they having scriptures enow without it, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ: and yet, after all, certain it is, that it is cited by many of them; by Fulgen-

tius (z), in the beginning of the sixth century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation; and Jerom, as before observed, has it in his translation made in the latter end of the fourth century; and it is cited by Athanasius (a) about year 350; and before him by Cyprian (b), in the middle of the third century, about the year 250; and is referred to by Tertullian (c) about the year 200; and which was within a hundred years, or little more, of the writing of the epistle; which may be enough to satisfy any one of the genuineness of this passage; and besides, there never was any dispute about it till Erasmus left it out in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the old British copy before-mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. The heavenly witnesses of Christ's Sonship are,

The Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost] The Father is the first person, so called, not in reference to the creatures, angels, or men, he is the Creator, and so the Father of; for this is common to the other two persons: but in reference to his Son Jesus Christ, of whose Sonship he bore witness at his baptism and transfiguration upon the mount. The Word is the second person, who said and it was done; who spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation; who was in the beginning with God the Father, and was God, and by whom all things were created; he declared himself to be the Son of God, and proved himself to be so by his works and miracles; see *Mark* xiv. 61, 62. *John* v. 17, &c. and chapter x. 30, &c. and his witness of himself was good and valid; see *John* viii. 13—18. and because it is his Sonship that is here testified of, therefore the phrase, *the Word*, and not *the Son*, is here used. The *holy Ghost* is the third person who proceeds from the Father, and is also called the Spirit of the Son, who testified of Christ's Sonship also at his baptism, by descending on him as a dove, which was the signal given to John the Baptist by which he knew him, and bare record of him, that he was the Son of God. Now the number of these witnesses was three, there being so many persons in the Godhead; and such a number being sufficient, according to law, for the establishing of any point: to which may be added, that they were witnesses in heaven, not to the heavenly inhabitants, but to men on earth; they were so called, because they were in heaven, and from thence

(z) Respons. contr. Arian. obj. 10. & de Trinitate, c. 4.

(a) Contra Arian. p. 109.

(b) De Unitate Eccles. p. 255.

& in Ep. 73. ad Jubaian, p. 184.

c. 25.

(c) Contra Praxian, c. 25.

thence gave out their testimony; and which shews the firmness and excellency of it, it being not from earth, but from heaven, and not human but divine; to which may be applied the words of Job in chapter xvi. 19. It follows,

And these three are one] Which is to be understood not only of their unity and agreement in their testimony, they testifying of the same thing, the Sonship of Christ; but of their unity in essence or nature, they being the one God. So that this passage holds forth and asserts the unity of God, a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the proper deity of each person, and their distinct personality; the unity of essence in that they are one; a Trinity of persons in that they are three, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost, and are neither more nor fewer; the deity of each person, for otherwise their testimony would not be the testimony of God, as in *1. 9.* and their distinct personality; for were they not three distinct persons, they could not be three testifiers, or three that bare record. This being a proper place, I shall insert the faith of the ancient Jews concerning the doctrine of the Trinity; and the rather, as it agrees with the apostle's doctrine in words and language, as well as in matter. They call the three persons in the Godhead three degrees: they say (*d*), "*Jehovah, Elobenu* (our God) *Jehovah, Deut. vi. 4.* these are the three degrees with respect to this sublime mystery, "in the beginning Elohim, or God, "created," *Gen. i. 1, &c.*" And these three, they say, though they are distinct, yet are one, as appears by what follows (*e*): "Come, see the mystery of the word; there are three degrees, "and every degree is by itself, yet they are all "one, and are bound together in one, and one "is not separated from the other." Again, it is said (*f*), "This is the unity of *Jehovah* the first, "*Elobenu, Jehovah*, lo, all of them are one, and "therefore called one; lo, the three names are "as if they were one, and therefore are called "one, and they are one; but by the revelation "of the holy Spirit it is made known, and they "by the sight of the eye may be known, *אלוה אחד*, "*אלוה אחד*, "that these three are one:" and this "is the mystery of the voice which is heard; the "voice is one, and there are three things, fire, "and spirit, and water, and all of them are one "in the mystery of the voice, and they are but "one: so here, *Jehovah, Elobenu, Jehovah*, they "are one, the three, *שמות*, forms, modes, or "things, which are one." Once more (*g*),

"there are two, and one is joined unto them, "and they are three; and when the three are "one, he says to them, these are the two names "which *Israel* heard, *Jehovah, Jehovah*, and "*Elobenu* is joined unto them, and it is the seal "of the ring of truth; and when they are joined "as one, they are one in one unity." And this they illustrate by the three names of the soul of man (*b*); "The three powers are all of them one, "the soul, spirit, and breath, they are joined as "one, and they are one; and all is according "to the mode of the sublime mystery," meaning the Trinity. Says R. Isaac (*i*), "Worthy "are the righteous in this world, and in the "world to come, for lo the whole of them is "holy, their body is holy, their soul is holy, "their spirit is holy, their breath is holy, holy "are these three degrees, "according to the "form above."—Come, see these three degrees "cleave together as one, the soul, spirit, and "breath." The three first sephirot, or numbers, in the Cabalistic tree, intend the three divine persons; the first is called the chief crown, and first glory, whose essence no creature can comprehend (*k*), and designs the Father, *John i. 18.* the second is called wisdom, and the intelligence illuminating, the crown of the creation, the brightness of equal unity, who is exalted above every head; and he is called by the Cabbalists, the second glory (*l*); see *1 Cor. i. 24.* *John i. 9.* *Rev. iii. 14.* *Heb. i. 3.* *Eph. i. 21.* this is the Son of God: the third is called understanding sanctifying, and is the foundation of ancient wisdom, which is called the worker of faith; and he is the parent of faith, and from his power faith flows (*m*); and this is the holy Spirit; see *Pet. i. 2.* *2 Cor. iv. 13.* Now they say (*n*), that these three first numbers are intellectual, and are not, *מדות*, properties, or attributes, as the other seven are. R. Simeon ben Jochai says (*o*), "Of the three "superior numbers it is said, *Psalms lxii. 11.* *God "bath spoken once, twice have I heard this; one "and two, lo the superior numbers, of whom it "is said, one, one, one, three ones, and this is "the mystery of *Psalms lxii. 11.*" Says R. Judah Levi (*p*), "Behold the mystery of the numberer, the number, and the numbered; in the bosom of God it is one thing, in the bosom of man three; because he weighs with his understanding, and speaks with his mouth, and writes with his hand." It was usual with the ancient*

(*d*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3.

(*e*) Ibid. in Lev. fol. 27. 2.

(*f*) Ibid. in Exod. fol. 12. 3, 4.

(*g*) Ibid. in Num.

fol. 67. 3.

(*b*) Ibid. in Exod. fol. 73. 4.

(*i*) Ibid. in Lev. fol. 29. 2.

(*k*) Sepher Yetzira, Semit. 1.

(*l*) Ibid. Semit. 2.

(*m*) Ibid. Semit. 3.

(*n*) R. Menachem apud Rittangel, in

Yetz. p. 193.

(*o*) Tikkune Zohar apud ibid. p. 64.

(*p*) Apud ibid. p. 38.

ancient Jews to introduce Jehovah speaking, or doing any thing in this form, "I and my house of judgment;" and it is a rule with them, that wherever it is said, *and Jehovah*, he and his house of judgment are intended (9); and Jarchi frequently makes use of this phrase to explain texts where a plurality in the Godhead is intended, as *Gen. i. 26. Cant. i. 11.* and it is to be observed, that a house of judgment, or a *Sanhedrim*, among the Jews, never consisted of less than three. They also had used to write the word *Jehovah* with three *Jods*, in this form, *יהוה*, as representing the three divine persons: one of their more modern (r) writers has this observation on the blessing of the priest in *Numb. vi. 24—26.* "These three verses begin with a *Jod*, in reference to the three *Jods* which we write in the room of the name, (that is, *Jehovah*) for they have respect to the three superior things."

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth] To the same truth of the sonship of Christ.

The spirit, and the water, and the blood] By the spirit is not meant the human spirit or soul of Christ; for however that may be a witness of the truth of his human nature, yet not of his divine sonship; and moreover cannot be said to be a witness in earth; rather the Gospel called the Spirit, which is a testimony of Christ's person, office, and grace, and is preached by men on earth; or else the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on men on earth, both in an extraordinary and ordinary way, by which they have been qualified to bear witness to this truth; or it may be the holy Spirit itself is intended, as he is in the hearts of his people here on earth, where he not only witnesses to the truth of their sonship, but also of the sonship of Christ, and is that witness a believer has within himself of it, mentioned in *1. 10.* By *water* is designed, not internal sanctification, which though an evidence of regeneration and adoption, yet not of Christ's sonship; but water-baptism, as administered on earth in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the holy Ghost; and which is a noble and standing testimony to the proper, natural, and eternal sonship of Christ: and by *blood* is intended, not justification by the blood of Christ, but rather the blood of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus, who have shed it on earth, in

testimony of their faith in the Son of God, and thereby sealing the truth of it; or rather the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is the communion of the blood of Christ; and represents that blood which was shed for the remission of sins, and has a continual virtue to cleanse from all sin, which is owing to his being the Son of God. The three witnesses on earth seem therefore to be the Gospel, attended with the Spirit and power of God, and the two ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper.

And these three agree in one] In their testimony of Christ, the word and ordinances agree together; and the sum and substance of them is Christ; they come from him, and center in him; they are like the cherubim over the mercy-seat, that looked to one another, and to that; and the two ordinances are the churches two breasts, which are equal, and like to one another; there is a great agreement between them, they are like to two young ones that are twins.

9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

If we receive the witness of men] The witness of a sufficient number of credible men, of men of good character and report, is always admitted in any case, and in any court of judicature; it was allowed of in the law of Moses; every thing was proved and established hereby; upon this men were justified or condemned, cognizance was taken of mens sins, and punishment inflicted, yea, death itself, *Deut. xvii. 6.* and chapter *xix. 15.* *Heb. x. 28.* and even in this case concerning the Son of God, his coming into the world, and the dignity of his person, the testimony of men is credited: as that of the wise men, who declared, that the king of the Jews was born, and his star had been seen in the east, which Herod himself gave credit to, and upon it summoned the chief-priests, and enquired of them where he should be born; and also of the shepherds, who testified to the appearance of angels, who told them, that there was then born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and who also related, that they themselves saw the infant at Bethlehem; and especially of John the Baptist, whose testimony was true, and could not be objected to by the Jews themselves, who sent to him, before whom he bore a plain and faithful witness. Now if an human testimony may be, and is received,

The witness of God is greater] More valuable, surer, and to be more firmly depended on, since it

(9) Zohar in *Gen. fol. 48. 4.* Jarchi in *Gen. xix. 24.* Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in *ibid.* & *Sanhedrim*, fol. 3. 2. (r) R. Abraham Seba in *Tazur Hammor*, fol. 23, 2.

it must be infallible; for God can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son] Even the witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, is the testimony, not of men, but of God; the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of God, is the testimony of God; and so the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's-supper, which bear witness of Christ, are not of men, but of God; and especially the witness of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, must be the testimony of God, since, though three persons, they are one God; particularly the witness which God the Father testified of his Son Jesus Christ at his baptism and transfiguration, must be allowed to be the testimony of God, and far greater than any human testimony, and therefore to be received.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

He that believeth on the Son of God] As a divine person who came in the flesh, and obeyed the law, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and obtained life and salvation for men: he that with the heart believes in him for righteousness, and eternal life, he being the Son of God, truly and properly God, and so able to save all that believe in him.

Hath the witness in himself] Of the need he stands in of Christ, and of the suitableness, fullness, and excellency of him; the Spirit of God enlightening him into the impurity of his nature, his impotence to do any thing spiritually good, his incapacity to atone for sin, and the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and convincing him, that nothing but the blood of the Son of God can cleanse him from sin, and only his sacrifice can expiate it, and his righteousness justify him from it, and that without him he can do nothing; testifying also to the efficacy of his blood, the completeness of his sacrifice and satisfaction, the excellency of his righteousness, and the energy of his grace and strength: so he comes to have such a witness in himself, that if ten thousand arguments were ever so artfully formed, in favour of the purity of human nature, the power of man's free-will, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, and against the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, which gives virtue to his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness,

they would all signify nothing to him, he would be proof against them. And such an one very readily receives into him the testimony God gives of his Son, of the glory and excellency of his person, and retains it in him. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "hath the witness of God in him;" to which the Ethiopic version agrees, and confirm the last observation.

He that believeth not God] Does not receive his testimony concerning his Son: the Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "he that believeth not the Son;" and the Ethiopic version, "his Son;" and the Arabic version "the Son of God;" and so is a direct antithesis to the phrase in the former clause of the verse.

Hath made him a liar] Not the Son, but God, as the Arabic version renders it, "hath made God himself a liar;" who is the God of truth, and cannot lie; it is impossible he should; and as nothing can be more contumelious and reproachful to the being and nature of God, so nothing can more fully expose and aggravate the sin of unbelief, with respect to Christ, as the Son of God.

Because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son] At the times and places before observed.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.

And this is the record] The sum and substance of it, with respect to the person of Christ, and the security of salvation in him, who is the true God, and eternal life.

That God hath given to us eternal life] Which is a life of glory and happiness hereafter; in the present state is unseen, but will in the world to come be a life of vision, free from all the sorrows and imperfections of this; and will be of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and for ever. This is a pure free-grace gift of God the Father, proceeding from his sovereign good-will and pleasure, and which he gives to all his chosen ones, for they are ordained unto eternal life; to as many as he has given to his Son; to all that are redeemed by his blood, and are brought to believe in him: to these he gave it in his Son before the world began; and to the same in time, he gives the right unto it, the meetness for it, and the pledge and earnest of it; and will hereafter give them the thing itself, the whole of it, to be possessed and enjoyed by them in person, to all eternity.

And

And this life is in his Son] Not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself; Christ asked it of his Father in the covenant of peace, and he gave it to him, that he might have it in himself for all his people; and here it is safe and secure, it is hid with Christ in God, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him; and because he lives, this life will never be lost, or they come short of it.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

He that hath the Son] Has a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him, true faith in him; who has him dwelling in his heart, and living in him.

Hath life] Not only spiritual life, being quickened by him, and living by faith on him, but eternal life; the knowledge he has of him is eternal life; he has it in faith and hope, and has a right unto it, and the earnest of it, as well as has it in Christ his representative, whom he has, and in whom this life is.

And he that hath not the Son of God] No knowledge of him, nor faith in him, nor enjoyment of him,

Hath not life] He is dead in sin, he is alienated from the life of God, has no title to eternal life, nor meetness for it, nor shall enjoy it, but shall die the second death.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

These things have I written unto you] Which are contained in the epistle in general, and particularly what is written in the context, concerning the victory of the world, being ascribed to him who believes that Christ is the Son of God; and concerning the six witnesses of his Sonship, and the record bore by God, that the gift of eternal life is in him: and which are especially written to them,

That believe on the name of the Son of God] Who not only believed that Christ is the Son of God, which this six-fold testimony would confirm them in, but also believed in his name, for righteousness, life, and salvation; in which name there is all this, and in no other; and who also professed their faith in him, and were baptized in

his name, and continued believing in him, and holding fast their profession of him. The end of writing these things to them was,

That ye may know that ye have eternal life] That there is such a thing as eternal life; that this is in Christ; that believers have it in him, and the beginning of it in themselves; and that they have a right unto it, and meetness for it, and shall certainly enjoy it; the knowledge of which is had by faith, under the testimony of the Spirit of God, and particularly what is above written concerning eternal life, being a free-grace gift of God; and this being in Christ, and the assurance of it, that such who have him, or believe in him, have that which might serve to communicate, cultivate, and increase such knowledge.

And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God] Which they had done already, and still did; the sense is, the above things were written to them concerning the Son of God, that they might be encouraged to continue believing in him, as such; to hold fast the faith of him, and go on believing in him to the end; and that their faith in him might be increased; for faith is imperfect, and is capable of increasing, and growing exceedingly; and nothing more tends unto, or is a more proper means of it, than the sacred writings, the reading and hearing them explained, and especially that part of them, which respects the person, office, and grace of Christ. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's manuscripts, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe in the name of the Son of God."

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

And this is the confidence that we have in him] Either in God, to whom prayer is made; or in the Son of God, through whose blood and righteousness believers in him have confidence with God at the throne of grace; they can come with boldness and intrepidity, and use freedom and liberty of speech, as the word here used signifies, especially when they have the spirit of Christ with them, and are under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and have a comfortable assurance of being heard and answered; and this is what the Jews call *חַסְדֵּי הַתְּפִלָּה*, "the consideration, or attention of prayer (s)," which they explain thus;

(s) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2.

thus; "After a man has prayed, he judges in his heart that the holy blessed God will give him his reward, and will do every thing needful for him, and will hear his prayer, because he has prayed with intention;" but this is much better expressed, and upon a much better foundation, by our apostle here.

That, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us] To ask any thing according to the will of God, is to ask as to matter what, and in a manner which is agreeable to it; by which is meant, not his secret will, or his purposes and decrees, which are unknown, though, so far as these are made known, they are not to be prayed against, for they can never be made void; and therefore, when God had declared it as his purposing will, that the Israelites in the wilderness should not enter into Canaan's land, and that he had rejected Saul from the kingdom, in these cases it would have been wrong for Moses to have prayed for the one, or Samuel for the other; 1 Sam. xvi. 1. and though no one person is to be excluded from our prayers on the account of the decree of reprobation, since no man can certainly be known to be a reprobate; yet it does not become us to pray for the conversion and salvation of reprobates in general, since this would be contrary to the decree of God: and such purposes which God has declared by prophecy he has purposed in himself, as the conversion of the Jews, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the glory of the Gospel church, for these we should pray that God would hasten them in his own time, and we are sure of being heard; but the revealed will of God is here intended, by which it appears that all grace is laid up in Christ, and all spiritual blessings are with him, and that the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and full of the sure mercies of David, and of exceeding great and precious promises; all which are treasured up for the benefit and use of the people of God; and if, therefore, they ask for any grace, or supply of grace, for any spiritual blessing, or mercy, laid up in Christ, in the covenant, or in any of the promises, they ask that for matter which is according to the will of God, and which they may be assured they shall have, sooner or later: and to ask in a manner agreeable to his will, is to come in the name of Christ, and make mention of his righteousness, and ask for his sake; to put up all petitions in faith, with fervency, in sincerity, and uprightness; with reverence, humility, and submission to the divine will, and with importunity; and such askers God hears, even so as to answer, and grant their requests in his own

time, though not always in theirs; in some cases sooner, in others later, according to his infinite wisdom, and in his own way, which is always the best, though not in theirs, as in the case of the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7-9. The Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read, "if we ask any thing according to, or in his name;" that is, of Christ, and which agrees with John xiv. 13, 14. and chap. xvi. 23, 24.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

And if we know that he hear us] As it may be assured he does hear and answer all such persons that ask according to his will.

Whatsoever we ask, we know] Or are assured,

That we have the petitions that we desired of him] For as it is the nature of that holy confidence which believers have in God, to believe whatever they ask according to his will in general, shall be granted, so every request in particular; yea, before the mercy desired, or the favour asked for is conferred, they are as sure of having it in God's own time and way, as if they now had it in hand and fact.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

If any man see his brother sin] Those who have such an interest at the throne of grace, and such boldness and freedom there, should make use of it for others, as well as themselves, and particularly for fallen believers; for a brother; not in a natural or civil sense, but in a spiritual sense, one that is judged to be born again, and belongs to the family and household of God, and is a member of a Gospel-church; and so is under the watch, inspection, and care of the saints; and is observed to sin, as the best of men are not without it, nor the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed: and this sin of his is

A sin which is not unto death] Every sin, even the least sin, is in its own nature mortal, or deserving of death; the proper wages of sin is death, yea death eternal: yet none of the sins of God's elect are unto death, or issue in death, in fact; which is owing not to any different nature there is in their sins, or to their good works which counterbalance them; but to the grace of God, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ, by which

which they are pardoned and justified, and freed from obligation to punishment, or eternal death, the just demerits of them: but how should another man know that a brother's sin is not unto death, when it is of the same nature and kind with another man's? it is known by this, that he does not continue in it; he does not live in the constant commission of it; his life is not a course of iniquity; that sin he sins is not a governing one in him; though he falls into it, he rises up out of it through divine grace, and abides not in it; and he has a sense of it, and is sorry for it, after a godly sort; lothes it, and himself for it; is ashamed of it, ingenuously confesses it, and mourns over it and forsakes it: now when any strong believer or spiritual man sees or knows that a brother has sinned, and this is his case,

He shall ask] He shall pray to God for him; that he would administer comfort to him, discover his love, and apply his pardoning grace to him, and indulge him with his presence and the light of his countenance.

And he shall give him life:] That is, God shall give the sinning brother life; by which may be meant comfort, that which will revive his drooping spirits, and cause him to live cheerfully and comfortably, that so he may not be swallowed up with over-much sorrow; or he shall grant a discovery of the pardon of his sin unto him, which will be as life from the dead, and will give him a comfortable hope of eternal life, of his right unto it, and meetness for it.

For them that sin not unto death] Or "to them," as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; for this phrase is only descriptive of the persons to whom life is given by God, upon the prayers of saints for them, and not that this life is given to him that prays, and by him to be given to the sinning person. The Vulgate Latin version renders the whole thus, "and life shall be given to him that sins not unto death;" which leaves the words without any difficulty: the Ethiopic version indeed renders it, "and he that prays shall quicken him that sins a sin not unto death;" and this sense some interpreters incline to, and would have with this text compared 1 Tim. iv. 16. James v. 20.

There is a sin unto death] Which is not only deserving of death, as every other sin is, but which certainly and inevitably issues in death in all that commit it, without exception; and that is the sin against the holy Ghost, which is neither forgiven in this world nor in that to come, and therefore must be unto death; it is a sinning wilfully, not in a practical, but doctrinal way, after a man has received the knowledge of the truth;

VOL. V.

it is a wilful denial of the truth of the Gospel, particularly that peace, pardon, righteousness, eternal life and salvation are by Jesus Christ, contrary to the light of his mind, and this joined with malice and obstinacy; so that there is no more or other sacrifice for such a sin; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of wrath and fury to fall on such opposers of the way of life; and as the presumptuous sinners under Moses's law died without mercy, so must these despightful ones under the Gospel; see *Matt. xii. 31, 32. Heb. x. 26—29*. Some think there is an allusion to one of the kinds of excommunication among the Jews, called *Shammatha*, the etymology of which, according to some Jewish writers, is מיתה, "there is death (1)."

I do not say that he shall pray for it] The apostle does not expressly forbid to pray for the forgiveness of this sin, yet what he says amounts unto it; he gives no encouragement to it, or any hopes of succeeding, but rather the reverse; and indeed where this sin is known, or can be known, it is not to be prayed for, because it is irremissible; but as it is a most difficult point, to know when a man has sinned it, the apostle expresses himself with great caution.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

All unrighteousness is sin] All unrighteousness against God or man is a sin against the law of God, and the wrath of God is revealed against it, and it is deserving of death; yet all unrighteousness is not unto death, as the sins of David, which were unrighteousness both to God and man, and yet they were put away, and he died not; Peter sinned very foully, and did great injustice to his dear Lord, and yet his sin was not unto death; he had repentance unto life given him, and a fresh application of pardoning grace.

And there is a sin not unto death] This is added for the relief of weak believers, who hearing of a sin unto death, not to be prayed for, might fear that theirs were of that kind, whereas none of them are; for though they are guilty of many unrighteousnesses, yet God is merciful to them, and forgives, *Heb. viii. 12*. and so they are not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

(1) T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

We know that whosoever is born of God] Who is regenerated by his Spirit and grace, and quickened by his power; who has Christ formed in him, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, and has every grace implanted in him,

Sinnetb not] The sin unto death; nor does he live in sin, or is under the power and dominion of it, though he does not live without it; see the note on chap. iii. 9.

But he that is begotten of God] The Vulgate Latin version reads, "the generation of God keeps or preserves him;" that is, that which is born in him, the new man, the principle of grace, or seed of God in him, keeps him from notorious crimes, particularly from sinning the sin unto death, and from the governing power of all other sins; but all other versions, as well as copies, read as we do, and as follows:

Keepeth himself] Not that any man can keep himself by his own power and strength; otherwise what mean the petitions of the saints to God that he would keep them, and even of Christ himself to God for them on the same account? God only is the keeper of his people, and they are only kept in safety whom he keeps, and it is by his power they are kept; but the sense is, that a believer defends himself by taking to him the whole armour of God, and especially the shield of faith, against the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and particularly the temptations of Satan.

And that wicked one toucheth him not] He cannot come at him so as to wound him to the heart, or destroy that principle of life that is in him, or so as to overcome and devour him; he may tempt him and sift him, and buffet him, and greatly afflict and grieve him, but he cannot touch his life, or hurt him with the second death; nay, sometimes the believer is so enabled to wield the shield of faith, or to hold up Christ the shield by faith, and turn it every way in such a manner, that Satan, who is here meant by the wicked one, because he is notoriously so, cannot come near him, nor in with him; cannot work upon him at all with his temptations, nor in the least hurt his peace, joy, and comfort: the saints know their perseverance from the promises of God and declarations of Christ; *Psal. cxxv. 1, 2. Jer. xxxii. 40. Matt. xvi. 18. John x. 28.*

19 *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

And we know that we are of God] The sons of God, and regenerated by him; this is known by the Spirit of God, which witnesses to the spirits

of the saints, that they are the children of God; and by the fruits and effects of regenerating grace, as love to the brethren, and the like.

And the whole world lieth in wickedness] That is, the men of the world, the greater part of the inhabitants of it, who are as they were when they came into it, not being born of God; these are addicted to sin and wickedness; the bias of their minds is to it, they are set upon it, and give themselves up to it, are immersed in it, and are under the power of it: or *in the wicked one*; Satan, the god of this world; they are under his influence, and led according to his will, and they are governed by him, and are at his beck and command; and this is known by sad experience, it is easy of observation; see *2 Esdras iv. 27.*

20 *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

And we know that the Son of God is come] That the second person in the Godhead, who is equal to the Father, and of the same nature with him, is come from the Father, from heaven into this world, not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; that he is come in the flesh, or is become incarnate, in order to work out salvation for his people, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and this John and others knew, for they had personal knowledge of him, and converse with him; they saw him with their eyes, heard him, and handled him; he dwelt among them, preached to them, wrought miracles before them, which proved him to be what he was; and it may be known that the Messiah must be come, since Daniel's weeks, which fixes the time of his coming, are long ago up; the scepter is departed from Judah, and the second temple is destroyed, neither of which were to be till the Messiah came; and that Jesus of Nazareth is he, who is come, may be known by the characters of him, and the works done by him.

And hath given us an understanding] Not a new faculty of the understanding, but new light into it; a knowledge of spiritual things; of himself, and of God in him, and of the truths of the Gospel, and of all divine and heavenly things; for he, the Son of God, is come a light into the world, and gives spiritual light to men.

That we may know him that is true] Or "the true God," as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic

Ethiopic versions read; that is God the Father, who is the true God, in opposition to the false gods of the heathens, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and the spiritual knowledge of him as the Father of Christ, and as a covenant-God and father in him, is only given to men by Christ, and this is life eternal; see *Matt. xi. 27. John xvii. 3.*

And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ] The words *Jesus Christ*, are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version; however, certain it is, that *Jesus Christ* is meant by his Son, who is the Son of the true and living God, and is himself *true*; not only true God, as hereafter asserted, but true man, having a true body and a reasonable soul, and was true and faithful in the discharge of his offices, as prophet, priest, and king; he faithfully declared the whole will of God, and taught the way of God in truth; he was faithful to him that appointed him, by securing his glory when he made reconciliation for the sins of the people; and all the administrations of his kingly office are just and true; yea he is truth itself, the substance of all the types, in whom all the promises are yea and amen, and who has all the truths of the Gospel and treasures of wisdom in him: now his people are in him; they were secretly in him before the world was, being loved by him, chosen in him, put into his hands, preserved in him, and represented by him; and openly, at conversion, when they are anew created in him, brought to believe in him, and live upon him, and he lives in them, and they are in him as branches in the vine; and this is known by his Spirit being given them, by the communication of his grace unto them, and by the communion they have with him.

This is the true God, and eternal life] That is, the Son of God, who is the immediate antecedent to the relative *this*; he is the true God, with his

Father and the Spirit, in distinction from all false, fictitious, or nominal deities; and such as are only by office, or in an improper and figurative sense: Christ is truly and really God, as appears from all the perfections of deity, the fulness of the Godhead being in him; from the divine works of creation and providence being ascribed to him; and from the divine worship that is given him; as well as from the names and titles he goes by, and particularly that of *Jehovah*, which is incommunicable to a creature: and he is called *eternal life*, because it is in him; and he is the giver of it to his people; and that itself will chiefly consist in the enjoyment and vision of him, and in conformity to him.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

From heathen idols and idolatry, into which the saints in those times might be liable to be drawn, by reason of their dwelling among heathen idolaters, and being related to them, and by the too great freedom used in eating things sacrificed to idols in their temples; and from all other idols that might be introduced by some who went by the name of christians, as the Gnostics, who worshipped the images of Simon and Helena; and the passage may be an antidote against the worshipping of images, afterwards introduced by the Papists. Moreover, errors and false doctrines, which are the figments of mens minds, and what they are fond of, may be called idols, and should be guarded against, and abstained from; as also the lusts of mens hearts, and all the evil things that are in the world, which are adored by the men of it; and even every creature that is loved too much, is an idol; hence covetousness is called idolatry; nor should any creature or thing be loved more than God or Christ; the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit, he is only to be worshipped, feared, and loved.

The Second Epistle of J O H N.

THOUGH this epistle was called in question and gainsaid by some as authentic, as Eusebius says (a), yet there is no room to doubt of the authority of it; it was very early received into the canon of the scripture, and is cited as such, and also as the apostle John's, by Irenæus (b), who was a disciple of Polycarp, and an hearer of Papias, who were both disciples of the apostle John; nor need there be any question as to his being the author of it. Eusebius indeed does say (c), it was a doubt whether it was the apostle John's or another of the same name; and some have since asserted, that it was written not by John the Evangelist, but by John the presbyter of Ephesus, after the apostle; and this is thought to have some confirmation from the author of it being called an elder, or presbyter, which is judged not so agreeable to the apostle John; though it should be observed, that Peter an apostle styles himself an elder, as John here does, 1 Peter v. 1. moreover, the above ancient writer Irenæus, expressly ascribes this epistle to John, the disciple of the Lord; and whoever compares some passages in this epistle with the former, particularly ch. 5, 6, 7, 9. with 1 John ii. 7, 8. and chapters iii. 23. and v. 3. and iv. 1—3. will easily conclude, from the likeness of stile and matter, that it is a genuine epistle of the apostle John: the design of which is to exhort and encourage the lady he writes to, to continue in the truth and faith of the Gospel, and in love to God and his people, and to avoid false teachers and their doctrines.

The writer of this epistle describes himself by his office, an *elder*, and inscribes it to a certain matron, whom he styles, on account of her honour and riches, a *lady*; and by reason of her grace, *elect*; and to her children, who, as well as herself, were the objects of the apostle's love, and of all that knew the truth, and that for the sake of it, which was common to them all, ch. 1, 2. the salutation follows, ch. 3. and then a congratulation of the lady, that some of her children walked in the same path of truth with herself, ch. 4. and next an exhortation to brotherly love, which is the commandment from the beginning; the evidence of which love is walking according to that, and every other command of God, ch. 5, 6. and the rather this should be closely attended to, since many deceivers, who were no other than anti-christ, had got into the world, who did not own that Christ was come in the flesh; wherefore it became those that were concerned for his name and glory, as well as their own interest, to take heed lest what was wrought should be lost, and so a full reward be not received, ch. 7, 8. and then a description of these deceivers and false teachers is given; that they are transgressors of the rule of God's word, abide not in the doctrine of Christ, and so have

not God, any interest in him; whereas he that abides in the doctrine of Christ, has an interest both in the Father and in the Son, ch. 9. wherefore the apostle gives advice to the lady how to behave towards such; not to receive them into her house, nor wish them success, since so to do, would be to join with them in their evil deeds, ch. 10, 11. and then he excuses the shortness of his letter, though he had many things to write unto her, yet would not, because he hoped shortly to visit her, and then would personally relate what he had to communicate to their mutual joy, ch. 12. and closes the epistle with the salutation of her sister's children to her, ch. 13.

THE elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

The elder unto the elect lady and her children] By the *elder* is meant the writer of this epistle, the apostle John, who so calls himself either on account of his age, he being now near an hundred years of age, having out-lived all the apostles; or on account of his office, being a bishop or overseer, not only of the church at Ephesus, but of all the Asiatic

(a) Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 24.

(b) Adv. Hæres. l. 1. c. 13. & l. 3. c. 18.

(c) Ibid. c. 25.

Asiatic churches, which is the same with an elder; nor is this incompatible with his being an apostle; see *1 Pet. v. 1.* the *elect lady* is the person he writes unto; by whom is designed not the church of Christ, since such a way of speaking is unusual; and besides, he speaks of coming to see her face to face, and of the children of her elect sister; but some particular person, some rich, as well as gracious woman of John's acquaintance; and these words, *elect lady*, are neither of them proper names of the person: some think that the word *Kyria*, rendered *lady*, was the name of the person, as *Domina* with the Romans, and answers to the Hebrew word *Martha*; for as *מר*, *Mar*, signifies *lord*, so *מרת*, *Martha*, *lady*; and then the inscription runs, "to the choice or 'excellent Martha,'" and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "to the elect *Kyria*:" and others think that the word rendered *elect* is a proper name, and that this person's name was *Electa*, as *Electus* (*d*) is a man's name; and then it must read thus, "to the lady *Electa*;" but her sister also is so called, and it can hardly be thought that two sisters should be both of a name; neither of them are proper names, but characters and titles of respect and honour: she is called a *lady*, because she was a person of distinction and substance, which shews that God sometimes calls by his grace some that are rich and noble; and also that titles of respect and honour, where flattery is avoided, may be lawfully given to persons of dignity and wealth; so *Nazianzen* (*e*) calls his own mother by the same title; and it was usual to call women by this name from fourteen years of age (*f*): and this person also is said to be *elect*; either because she was a choice, famous, and excellent person, not only for her birth, nobility, and riches, but for her virtue, grace, and good works; or because she was chosen unto eternal life and salvation; and which the apostle might know without a special and divine revelation, by the Gospel coming with power to her; by the grace that was wrought in her; by the faith of God's elect, which she appeared to have, seeing it worked by love; and which may be, and ought to be concluded in a judgment of charity, of every one that professes faith in Christ, and walks according to it; and this also makes it appear that election is of particular persons, and not of nations, communities, and churches, as such; nor is it unusual to salute single persons under this character; see *Rom. xvi. 13.* this epistle is inscribed not only to this lady, but also to her children; who were not infants, but grown up,

and had made a profession of the truth, and walked in it, *2. 4.* and both the mother and the children the apostle represents as the objects of his love.

Whom I love in the truth] Either as being in the truth and faith of the Gospel; for though all men are to be loved as men, and to be done well to, yet they that are of the household of faith, or are in the faith, are in an especial manner to be loved and respected; see *Gal. vi. 10. Tit. iii. 15.* or the sense is, that the apostle loved this lady and her children sincerely and heartily, without dissimulation; not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

And not I only, but also all they that have known the truth] Either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth; not with a notional knowledge, but with the knowledge of approbation and affection; with a fiducial and appropriating one: or the Gospel, the word of truth; not with a speculative, but with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it: and this is not to be understood of every individual person then living, which had such a knowledge of the truth; for it cannot be reasonably thought that every individual person should know this lady and her children; but of all such persons who had any knowledge of them; for such who are born again by the word of truth, love not only him that begat them, but all those who are begotten of him; this shews in what sense the word *all* is sometimes taken.

2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us] Not for her high birth, nobility, or riches; but either for Christ's sake, who is the truth, and who dwells in the hearts of believers by faith, and who is the same that dwells in one as in another; and on his account it is that saints love one another, because they belong to him, he is formed in them, and his Image is enstamped upon them; and every like loves its like: or for the Gospel's sake, which has a place, and dwells in every saint, and is the same for matter and substance in one as in another; and unity of mind and judgment produces unity of affection; or for the sake of the truth of grace, the inward principle of grace, which dwells in every regenerate person; a communication of the experience of which, knits the saints one to another.

And shall be with us for ever] Where Christ enters and takes up his abode, from thence he never finally and totally departs, though he may sometimes hide his face with respect to communion, or withdraw his gracious presence; and where

(d) Herodian. Hist. l. i. c. 51—54.

(e) Epist. ad Basil. 4.

p. 769. vol. 1.

(f) Epictet. Enchirid. c. 62.

where the Gospel has once took place in the heart, and is become the engrafted word, it can never be rooted out, or be removed; and where the truth of grace is, it will remain; it is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace] This form of salutation, or wish and prayer for the blessings mentioned,

From God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ] Is the same used by other apostles; see 1 Tim. i. 2. Jude 2. and the note on Rom. i. 7. Only it is added here with respect to Christ, that he is

The Son of the Father, in truth and love] Which is mentioned by the apostle to confirm the deity of Christ, which is plainly implied in wishing for the above things equally from him, as from the Father; and to oppose and confront some heretics of those times, who denied the true and proper Sonship of Christ; and therefore he calls him, *the Son of the Father*, the only-begotten of the Father; and that *in truth*, or truly and properly, and not in a figurative and metaphorical sense, as magistrates are called the Sons of God, and children of the most high, by reason of their office; but so is not Christ, he is God's own Son, in a true, proper, and natural sense: and he is so *in love*; he is his well-beloved Son, his dear Son, the Son of his love, as he cannot otherwise be; since he is not only the image of him, but of the same nature, and has the same perfections with him.

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children] Not all, but some of them; for good parents have not always good children, or at least not all of them; Adam had a Cain, Abraham an Ishmael, and Isaac an Esau: God is pleased to shew his discriminating grace in tribes and families, by taking some, and leaving others: it is a great mercy when any are called by grace, and instead of the fathers are the children: and this was the case of some of the children of this elect lady, they were

Walking in truth] In Christ, the truth, by

faith, as they had received him; and in the truth of the Gospel, as they had embraced and professed it; they abode in it, and by it, and made a proficiency in the knowledge of it, which may be signified by walking, that being a progressive action; as also they walked according to it, and as became it; and likewise they walked in the truth of Gospel-worship, discipline, and ordinances.

As we have received a commandment from the Father] And which has been made known by Jesus Christ, as his mind and will. Now as it is matter of joy and gladness to godly parents, when their children walk in the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, so it is also to ministers of the Gospel, as well as to the angels in heaven; it gives them an inward pleasure and joy, and which is not only expressed by them, to such children and their parents, but is also abundant by many thanksgivings unto God.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

And now I beseech thee, lady] Or *Kyria*, which word the Syriac and Arabic versions retain, as if it was a proper name; the apostle having finished the inscription, salutation, and congratulation in the preceding verses, passes to an exhortation and entreaty to observe the commandment of love to one another, which is not a new commandment, but what was from the beginning.

Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another] See the note on 1 John ii. 7, 8.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

And this is love, that we walk after his commandments] By observing them as a rule of conversation, in so doing love is shewn to God; and such may expect the fresh discoveries of the love of God to them; see the note on 1 John v. 3.

This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it] That is, this is the will of God, that his people should walk in the truth of the Gospel, and abide by it, as they heard and received it at their first conversion, from the mouths of the apostles, or other faithful

faithful ministers of the word; a reason for which is given in the next verse.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

For many deceivers are entered into the world] By whom are meant false teachers, who are described by their quality, *deceivers*, deceitful workers, pretending to be ministers of Christ, to have a value for truth, a love for souls, and a view to the glory of God, but lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by their quantity or number *many*, and so likely to do much mischief; and by the place where they were, they were *entered into the world*; or “gone out into the world,” as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, as in 1 *John* iv. 1. see the note there; and by their tenet,

Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh] These were not the Jews who denied that Jesus was the Christ, though they would not allow that Christ was come in the flesh; but these were some who bore the christian name, and professed to believe in Jesus Christ, but would not own, that he was really incarnate, or assumed a true human nature, only in appearance; and denied that he took true and real flesh of the virgin, but only seemed to do so; and these are confuted by the apostle, 1 *John* i. 1. and upon every one of these he justly fixes the following character.

This is a deceiver and an antichrist] One of the deceivers that were come into the world, and one of the antichrists that were already in it; and who were the forerunners of the man of sin, and in whom the mystery of antiquity already began to work; for antichrist does not design any one particular individual person, but a set of men, that are contrary to Christ and opposers of him.

8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Look to yourselves] This is an exhortation to the elect lady, and her children, to look about them, and take care of themselves, and beware of these deceivers, and their doctrines.

That we lose not those things which we have wrought] Or as the Alexandrian copy, and many other copies, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought;” in embracing

the Gospel, making a profession of it, walking in it, shewing a zeal, and contending for it, expressing a love both by words and actions to the ministers of it, and suffering much reproach on the account of it; all which would be lost, and in vain, should they at last drop the Gospel, and embrace the errors of the wicked; see *Gal.* iii. 4. Moreover, such who do not go such lengths, as to let go the head, Christ, but retain him as the foundation, and the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, yet, among many precious things, may lay much rubbish on this foundation; and therefore should take heed, what they build upon it, since, though they themselves may be saved, their works may be destroyed, and so they suffer loss; see 1 *Cor.* iii. 11—15. and if we read the words, *that we lose not—which we have wrought*; the sense is the same, it being only a figure which Rhetoricians call communion, and it is frequently used when a common duty is exhorted to; see 1 *John* ii. 28. 2 *John* 5, unless it should be thought, that this has a peculiar reference to the ministers of the Gospel, as it may: for though the Gospel preached by them can never be lost, being the everlasting Gospel, and the word which abides for ever; yet it may be received in vain, and persons may fall from it, and imbibe error, and so the labour of Christ's faithful ministers may be so far in vain, and lost; and likewise, many souls whom they have thought they have gained to Christ, and that they have been instruments of working upon them for good, and have hoped they would be their joy and crown of rejoicing another day; when such are carried away by deceivers, fall off from the truth, ministers of the word lose what they thought they had wrought, which must give them great concern; and this is improved by the apostle into a reason and argument, why the persons he wrote to, should beware of seducers and their errors.

But that we receive a full reward] In heaven, and which itself is called the recompence of reward, and the reward of the inheritance; not that this is a reward of debt due to the works of men, which are not rewardable in themselves, for they are such as are due to God before they are performed; and when they are done, they are not profitable to him, nothing is given to him, or received by him; when all is done, that can be done, men are unprofitable servants; but this is a reward of grace, God has of his own grace, promised it to those who love and serve him; and because it will be given them of his grace, after their work is over, as wages are given to a servant when he has done his work, it goes by this name: and whereas it is said to be a *full* one, the meaning

is not as if it was different to different persons, for there is but one recompence of reward, or reward of the inheritance common to all the saints; or, as if it might be incomplete in some; it only signifies a large and exceeding great reward; see *Gen.* xv. 1. and *Ruth* ii. 12. in which last place the same phrase is used, as here; and where the Septuagint interpreters use the same words as here. And the Jews (*g*) often speak of a full reward, and an equal one, to be received hereafter. Perhaps regard is here had particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who have their reward in part here, for the workman is worthy of his reward, and they will have it in full hereafter. Moreover, the apostle might here be concerned, that he, and every faithful minister, might have their full number, they expected, that none may be missing, and which he may call a full reward: though the above copies and versions read here, as before, *ye*, and not *us*.

9. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Whosoever transgresseth] Not the law of God, of which every one is a transgressor, and that daily, in thought, word, or deed; but who passes over the rule and standard of doctrine the word of God, and will not adhere to that, nor walk according to it, but rejects and despises that rule.

And abideth not in the doctrine of Christ] Which he received from his Father, and delivered to his apostles, and of which he is the sum and substance; the doctrine which is concerning his person as the Son of God, and as truly God, and the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his one person; and concerning his offices, as the mediator, surety, and messenger of the covenant, and as the prophet, priest, and king of his church; and concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and compleat salvation by him: this is, תלמודו של מלך המשיח, "the doctrine of the King Messiah, or the Messiah's" "Talmud (*b*)," to use the Jewish phrase, and

which agrees with John's. Now, whoever has embraced and professed this doctrine, but errs concerning it, and rejects it, and abides not in it, as Satan abode not in the truth, appears to be of him.

Hath not God] For his father, but the devil, the father of lies; he has no true knowledge of God, for there is none but in Christ, whose doctrine such an one has denied; nor has he, nor can he, have communion with him, nor any interest in him.

He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ] As he hath received and professed it; neither can any thing remove him from it, not the arguments of false teachers, nor the reproaches and persecutions of men, or the snares and allurements of the world.

He hath both the Father and the Son] He has an interest in them both, and has knowledge of each of them, and fellowship of them. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, leave out the phrase of *Christ*, in the preceding clause, and only read, "in the doctrine;" and the Syriac version, "in his doctrine;" the sense is the same.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

If there come any unto you] Under the character of a preacher,

And bring not this doctrine] Or does not preach the doctrine of Christ, as before explained, but despises it, and preaches a contrary one,

Receive him not into your house] Neither into the house of God, suffer him not to preach there; nor into your own house, give him no entertainment there: false teachers always tried to creep into houses, where they served their own turn every way, both by feeding their bellies, and spreading their pernicious doctrines; and therefore such should be avoided, both publicly and privately; their ministry should not be attended on in the church, or house of God; and they should not be entertained in private houses, and much less carested.

Neither bid him God speed] Or give him the usual civil form of salutation, as a good day to you, all hail, all health, and prosperity attend you, the Lord be with you, and the like. The word used by the Jews was, אשׁר, which signifies "happiness;" so it is said (*i*) what do they salute

(*g*) Targum on *Ecc.* i. 3. & ii. 17. & Midrash *Kohélet*, fol. 72. 4.

(*e*) *Bereshit Rabba*, §. 98, fol. 85. 3.

(*i*) T. Hierof. *Sheviith*, fol. 35. 2. Vid. *Taanith*, fol. 64. 2.

lute with? אִשֵּׁר, "God speed;" which was forbidden to say to one that was plowing in the seventh year. The meaning is, that with such no familiar conversation should be had, lest any encouragement should be given them; or it should induce a suspicion in the minds of other fairs, that they are in the same sentiments; or it should tend to make others think favourably of them, and be a snare, and a stumbling-block to weak christians.

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

For he that biddeth him God speed] Wishes him well, and success in his ministry, or in a friendly and familiar way converses with him.

Is partaker of his evil deeds] He has fellowship with him; instead of reproving or shunning him, as he ought; he is an abettor of him in his principles, and so far joins in the propagation of them, and helps to spread them, and gives too much reason to think he is one with him in them.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

Having many things to write unto you] Either on a civil, or on a religious account, concerning the state of the churches of Asia, and particularly Ephesus, and of private families and persons, and concerning the truths and doctrines of the Gospel; not that he had any new one, or any other than what they had heard from the beginning, to communicate to them, by word of mouth; for this he

denies, *1. 5, 6.* wherefore this makes nothing for the unwritten traditions of the Papists, and as if the scriptures did not contain the whole of doctrine and of the will of God.

I would not write with paper and ink] Any more than what was written.

But I trust to come unto you] Where they were, but where that was is not known; very likely in some parts of Asia, and it may be, not far from Ephesus, since any long journey would not have been fit for the apostle to have taken in this his old age.

And speak face to face] That is, freely and familiarly converse together about things omitted in this epistle.

That our joy may be full] In seeing one another's faces, and through hearing the things that may be talked of; and since the conversation would doubtless turn on divine and evangelic things, so fulness, or a large measure of spiritual joy, may be here intended. Instead of "our joy," the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions read, "your joy."

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

Not the members of a sister-church, as some think; but the children of one who was the sister of this lady, according to the flesh; and who, as she, was either a very famous and excellent person, or rather one chosen of God likewise unto eternal life, and salvation; and whose children also were walking in the truth; and here send their christian salutation to their aunt; very likely those sisters children lived at Ephesus, where John resided.

Rec.e The

Rec.e The

The Third Epistle of J O H N.

This epistle was written by the apostle John, who calls himself an *elder*, as in the preceding, and is inscribed to a friend of his, whom he mentions by name, and expresses a very great affection for, on account of his steady adherence to the truths of the Gospel, *ch.* 1. he wishes him bodily health equal to that prosperity of soul he was indulged with, *ch.* 2. congratulates him upon the testimony the brethren that came from him gave him of the truth being in him, and of his walking in it, and upon hearing that his children also trod in the same path, *ch.* 3, 4. commends him for his hospitality and charity, of which testimonies were given before the church; and encourages him to go on doing the same acts of beneficence, since it was to such persons that went forth for the sake of Christ, and preaching in his name, and had nothing of the Gentiles for so doing; wherefore they ought to be received, and entertained by those of ability, that they might be fellow-helpers to the truth with them, *ch.* 5—8. He complains of Diotrephes as a proud, haughty, and over-bearing man in the church, where Gaius was a member, who would neither receive the letters the apostle sent, nor the brethren that came with them; nay, forbid them that would, and cast them out of the church for it, and prated against them with malicious words, whom he threatens to remember when he himself should come thither, *ch.* 9, 10. wherefore he exhorts Gaius not to follow such an ill example, but that which is good in any person; since he that does good appears to be of God, and he that does evil, it looks as if he had never known him, *ch.* 11. And particularly he recommends Demetrius, who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself, and had a testimony from the apostle, and those that were with him, which was known to be a true one, *ch.* 12. But though he had many things to say, both of one, and of the other, he determines to write no more at present, hoping he should shortly see him, and personally converse together; and closes the epistle with his own good wish, and with mutual salutations of friends, *ch.* 13, 14.

THE elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

The elder unto the well beloved Gaius] The elder

is the writer of the epistle, the apostle John, who so styles himself on account of his age, and office, as in the preceding epistle. The person to whom he writes, is *the well beloved Gaius*; not that Gaius, who was the apostle Paul's host, *Romans* xvi. 23. for though their characters agree, being both hospitable men, yet neither the place nor time in which they lived. The apostle Paul's Gaius lived at Corinth, this in some place near to Ephesus, for the apostle in his old age purposed to come and see him shortly; the other was contemporary with Paul, this with John; there were thirty or forty years difference between them: besides, the Corinthian Gaius was baptized by Paul, and was doubtless one of his spiritual children, or converts, whereas this Gaius was one of the apostle John's spiritual children, *ch.* 4. nor does he seem to be the same with Gaius of Macedonia, *Acts* xix. 29. or with Gaius of Derbe, *Acts* xx. 4. who seem to be two different persons by their country, though both companions in travel of the apostle Paul; for which reason, as well as the time of their living, neither of them can be this Gaius, who was a settled house-keeper, and resided at some certain place. His name is a Roman name, and the same with Caius, though he seems to have been a Jew, as he might, it being usual with the Jews in other countries to take Gentile names. His character is, that he was *well beloved*: that is, of God, as it appears he was from the grace bestowed on him, from the prosperous estate of his soul, and from the truth that was in him, and his walking in it; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the same reasons; and also of all the brethren and saints that knew him; he being a person not only truly gracious, and of faithfulness and integrity, but of great liberality and beneficence, which must gain him much love and esteem among them; and he was well beloved by the apostle John; and so the Syriac version renders it, "to my beloved Gaius;" though his love to him is expressed in the following clause.

Whom I love in the truth] As being in it, or for the sake of it, or truly and sincerely; see the note on 2 *John* 1.

2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Behold, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper]
Or

Or succeed in all temporal affairs, in the business of life, in which he was; and as success of this sort depends upon the blessing of God, which maketh rich, it is to be wished and prayed for from him.

And be in health] That is, of body, which above all things, above all outward mercies, is the most desirable; for without this, what are the richest dainties, the largest possessions, or the best of friends? without this there can be no comfortable enjoyment of either of them; and therefore of this sort of mercies, it is, in the first place, and above all others, to be wished for, and desired by one friend for another. The rule and measure of this wish, is according to the prosperity of his soul.

Even as thy soul prospereth] The soul is diseased with sin, and may be said to be in good health, when all its iniquities are forgiven; and may be said to prosper, when having a spiritual appetite for the Gospel, the sincere milk of the word, it feeds upon it, is nourished by it, and grows thereby; when it is in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love; when spiritual knowledge is increased, or it grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; when the inward man is renewed day by day with fresh strength, and when it enjoys communion with God, has the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation; and when it is fruitful in every good work.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came] From the place where Gaius lived, to that where John now resided; these brethren seem to be preachers of the word, who travelled from place to place to spread the Gospel.

And testified of the truth that is in thee] Either of Christ, who was formed in him; or of the Gospel, which had a place in his heart; or of the truth of grace that was in him, as well as of that faithfulness, integrity, and sincerity he appeared to be possessed of, being an Israelite indeed, and without guile.

Even as thou walkest in the truth] In Christ, and in the Gospel, and as became it, and with all uprightness; see 2 John 4. and this occasioned great joy in the apostle; as it is matter of joy to every one that truly loves Christ, and his Gospel, or has the true grace of charity in him, which en-

vies not the gifts and graces of others, but rejoiceth in the truth, wherever it is found; and especially to the faithful ministers of the word, when they hear of the truth of grace in any souls, and that such continue walking in the truth of the Gospel, and particularly those who have been wrought upon under their ministry, as follows.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

I have no greater joy] Nothing that causes greater joy. The Vulgate Latin version reads *grace* or *thanks*; and then the sense is, that he had nothing to be more thankful for.

Than to hear that my children walk in truth] Meaning his spiritual children, those whose conversion he had been the instrument of; and among these it seems Gaius was one.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers.

Beloved, thou doest faithfully] Or a faithful thing, and as became a faithful man, a believer in Christ; in all his beneficence and charity he acted the upright part; he did not do it in an hypocritical way, to be seen of men, and gain applause from them, but from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God.

Whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers] Which may design either different persons; and by *brethren* may be meant the poor brethren of the church that Gaius belonged to, and others that were well known to him; and by *the strangers*, not unconverted persons, but such of the saints as came from foreign parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel, and enlarge the interest of Christ: or else the same persons may be intended, for the words may be read, as they are in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, "what thou doest to the brethren, and this to strangers;" that is, as the Arabic version renders it, "to strange brethren;" or, as the Syriac version, "to the brethren," and especially them that are strangers; so that Gaius was a very hospitable man, one that entertained and lodged strangers, and used them very civilly and courteously, with great liberality, and with much integrity and sincerity.

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring

bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well :

Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church] At Ephesus, where John was; these brethren and strangers coming thither, and being greatly affected with Gaius's kindness and liberality to them, could not forbear speaking of it to his praise, in the presence of the members of the church, as well as acquainted the apostle John with it; the Syriac version reads, "before the whole church;" they bore testimony of his liberality in a very public manner. And this the apostle mentions to encourage Gaius to go on, and continue in his kindness to the same persons, since they retained such a grateful sense of past favours; and whereas they were now returning back, he desires that he would give them some further assistance.

Whom if thou bring forward on their journey] The word here used signifies, "to send on before," as in *Acts* xv. 3. and chapters xx. 38, and xxi. 5. *Rom.* xv. 24. *1 Cor.* xvi. 6, 11, 2 *Cor.* i. 16. *Tit.* iii. 13. and is used by the Septuagint in the same sense as here, and in the above places, in *Gen.* xviii. 16. where it is said, that *Abraham went with them* (the angels) *to bring them on in the way*, ללכת, *to send them on, or send them away*; dismiss them, take his leave of them in a friendly and honourable way. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, ללוות, "to accompany them;" and so this Greek word, which seems to answer to the Hebrew phrase, signifies an honourable accompanying, leading forth, and taking leave of friends; and so the apostle encourages Gaius to behave in like manner to the brethren and strangers; meaning, either by accompanying them in person, or by sending his servants along with them, both to direct them the way, and to secure them from danger, and chiefly by furnishing them with every thing necessary for them; see *Tit.* iii. 13. And this he would have him do,

After a godly sort] Or *worthy of God*; in imitation of God, who is merciful, kind, and beneficent; or as it became him whom God had called by his grace to his kingdom and glory; or as it was fit and proper such servants of God, as those brethren were, should be used; and this would be doing well.

Thou shalt do well] What is grateful and well-pleasing to God, and beautiful and lovely in the eyes of his people.

7 Because that for his name's sake

they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

Because that for his name's sake they went forth] From Judea; either of their own accord to preach the Gospel, or being drove out by the unbelieving Jews, for professing the name of Christ; and be it which it will, there was good reason why they should be regarded, and especially since they did as follows,

Taking nothing of the Gentiles] Even of those who were converted, through their preaching the Gospel, to whom they ministered, for of others, the unconverted Gentiles, they could not expect to receive; and this they did, as the apostles before them, because they would not be chargeable to them, and lest it should be thought they sought their own worldly interest, and not the good of souls, and glory of Christ, and so a stumbling-block be laid in the way of the Gospel, to hinder the progress of it. The Ethiopic version reads this in the singular number, "and I went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles."

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

We therefore ought to receive such] We who are Jews, that have believed in Christ, for such an one Gaius, it seems, as well as the apostle, were, ought to receive such preachers of the word into our houses, and entertain them cheerfully, whilst they continue, and supply them with all necessities when they depart.

That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth] That is, to the Gospel, and the propagation of it in the world: some are helpers to it, in preaching of it, by making use of the ministerial gifts bestowed upon them; and others are fellow-helpers with them, to the same good work, by their purses, communicating freely to the support of those who labour in the word and doctrine; and these latter have the honour to be co-workers, or fellow-labourers with the former, as the word here used signifies. The Alexandrian copy reads, "fellow-helpers to the church," that so the whole burden, of taking care of these ministers, might not lie upon them. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "fellow-helpers of the truth."

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

wrote

I wrote unto the church] Where Gaius was a member: those who take Gaius to be the same with Paul's host, and whom he baptized at Corinth, think the church at Corinth is here meant; but it seems rather to be meant of some church in Asia, nearer Ephesus; nor is it likely that John's first epistle should be here intended, which makes no mention of relieving the brethren, the ministers of the Gospel, that came from Judea; and that this epistle should not be preserved, need not seem strange; for it cannot be thought that every thing that was written by him to particular persons, or churches, should be continued. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Stephens's read, "I wrote something to the church;" upon this head, concerning receiving and supporting ministers of the Gospel, and so prevents an objection, that Gaius might make why did he not write to the church about it? The Vulgate Latin version reads, "I should, or would have wrote;" and the Syriac version, "I desired, or wished to have wrote;" suggesting, that though he had not wrote, yet it was much upon his mind, he had a great desire to it.

But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not] Which hindered him from writing, or was the reason why he wrote now to Gaius, since Diotrephes gave no heed to what he had wrote, suppressed his letter, and would not suffer it to be read to the brethren. This Diotrephes, by his name, which signifies one "nourished, or brought up by Jupiter," was a Gentile; there was one of this name, who was one of the kings of Athens (a); and what may confirm this is, his slighting and rejecting the brethren that came from Judea: it is very likely he was more than a private member in the church, and that he was an officer, and it may be the pastor; and though there is a pre-eminence, which of right belongs to such an officer, as to preside over the church, to govern, guide, and direct, according to the laws of Christ, he being set over the church, as a ruler, governor, and guide; yet this may be carried too far, as it was by this man, who coveted more than was his due, and lorded it over God's heritage, ruled the flock with force and cruelty, and usurped a tyrannical power over them; whereas every thing in a church ought to be done, by pastor and people, in love, meekness, and with mutual consent. And it may be also, that he sought to have the pre-eminence over the rest of the elders of the church, for in those large churches there were of-

ten times more elders and pastors than one; see *Acts* xx. 17, 28. *Phil.* i. 1. This ambitious spirit prevailed and obtained among the false teachers, who set up themselves at the head of parties, and above the apostles of Christ, and paved the way for antichrist, who assumed the title of universal bishop, which has introduced all the errors and impieties of the Romish church. Now this man being of such an ambitious, lordly, and governing spirit, received not the apostle John, and those that were with him; meaning not their persons, for as yet he, and they, were not in person where he was; but his letter, his orders, and instructions; these he paid no regard to, concealed them from the church, and would not admit them to be read: or else the apostle's sense is, that he received not the brethren that came from him; and were recommended by him, and whom he affectionately loved, and who were near and dear to him as himself; and therefore not receiving them, is interpreted by him, as not receiving himself.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

Wherefore if I come] Where both Gaius and Diotrephes lived, as he trusted he should shortly, *2. 14.*

I will remember his deeds which he doeth] Meaning, not only that he would tell him of them to his face, but make mention of them, and expose them to the whole church, and reprove him for them: and which are as follow,

Prating against us with malicious words] It is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel to be prated against, not only by the men of the world, but by professors of religion, and by such who call themselves preachers also; nor need it be wondered at, (since John, an apostle of Christ, the beloved disciple, who was so harmless and inoffensive in his conversation, so kind and loving in his disposition and temper, so meek and humble in his deportment, and now in such an advanced age, was prated against by a Diotrephes; and what is said against Christ's ministers, is no other than prating; silly, idle, trifling, and empty stuff, as the word used signifies; for want of greater things, they take up any little matter, and improve it against them; and this is often done with a malicious intent, to hurt their characters,

spoil

(a) Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. antiq. p. 217.

spoil their usefulness, and render their ministry unprofitable.

And not content herewith] With prating against the apostle John, and the ministers with him, in this wicked way.

Neither doth he himself receive the brethren] The meaning is not, that he did not receive them into the church, for they were there, since afterwards mention is made of his casting them out from thence; but he did not receive them into his house, and entertain them as he ought to have done; for a minister of the Gospel, and a pastor of a church, ought to be hospitable, and given to hospitality, and entertain strangers, especially those who are brethren in Christ, and fellow-ministers of the word; and the rather these were to be received, since they travelled about to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles, and took nothing of them. And this was not all, he not only did not receive them himself, and reject them, but was not willing others should receive them.

And forbiddeth them that would] On such who had a heart, as well as ability, to receive and entertain these poor brethren, he laid his injunctions and gave them strict orders, in his lordly and tyrannical way, not to shew any respect unto them.

And casteth them out of the church] That is, he excommunicated them, either those that entertained them, or rather the brethren themselves; which was an abuse of the ordinance of excommunication, as that ordinance is abused, when any single person, a pastor, or any other as here, assumes the power of doing it himself, and does it without the church; whereas it is a punishment or censure to be inflicted by many, or to be done by the joint-suffrage of the church; and when it is done in a wrong cause, for some small trifling matter, or none at all, and not in a case of heresy or immorality, obstinately persisted in; and when it is done from wrong principles, and with wrong ends, as to gratify the pride and passion of some; and not for the good of the person cast out, or to prevent others from falling into the same snare, or for the honour of religion, and the glory of God. The phrase seems to be taken from the Jews, who expressed their excommunication, or putting out of the synagogue, by a casting out; see *John ix. 34, 35*.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

Beloved, follow not that which is evil] Follow not evil in general, it being hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will, and bad in itself, as well as pernicious in its consequences; and particularly follow not, or do not imitate the particular evil or evils in Diotrephes; as his pride, ambition, love of pre-eminence, and tyrannical government in the church, and especially his hard-heartedness, cruelty, and inhospitality to the poor saints; and so the Arabic version reads, "do not imitate him in evil;" the examples of persons in office and authority have great influence, especially in cases of charity, when men can be excused thereby, and save their money, or be freed from an expence.

But that which is good] Follow and imitate that, be a follower of God, imitate him in acts of kindness and beneficence, be merciful as he is; copy after Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and declared it to be more blessed to give than to receive; and tread in the steps of those good men, who have shewn love to the name of Christ, by ministering to his saints; for though the apostle may mean every thing that is good, which is to be followed and imitated in any, yet he chiefly designs acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints and ministers: to which he encourages by the following,

He that doeth good, is of God] He is a child of God, he appears to be so, in that he is like to his heavenly Father, who is kind and merciful; he is born of God, he is passed from death to life, which his love to the brethren shews; he has the grace of God, and strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, without either of which he could not do that which is good.

But he that doeth evil, hath not seen God] Has had no spiritual saving sight of God in Christ; for if he had, he would abhor that which is evil; and, with Job, abhor himself for it, and reckon himself, with Isaiah, as undone, *Job xlii. 6. Isaiah vi. 5*. for such effects has the sight of God on the souls of men; such an one knows not God, nor what it is to have communion with him: for those who live in sin, in whom it is a governing principle, cannot have fellowship with God; nor has such an one ever felt the love of God in his soul, or been made a partaker of his grace, which would teach and constrain him to act otherwise. Compare this text with *1 John iii. 10*. which shews the apostle John to be the writer of this epistle. The Ethiopic version reads, "shall not see God;" that is, hereafter, in the world to come.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men

men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

Demetrius hath good report of all men] This man was of a quite different cast from Diotrophes, and therefore the apostle makes mention of him to Gaius, to be followed by him, and not the other; he was either the same with Demas, which is a contraction of this name, or the person that John sent from Ephesus with this letter: we read of an Ephesian of this name, *Acts* xix. 24. though not the same person; or else one that also was a member of the same church with Gaius and Diotrophes; and he being kind and beneficent, obtained a good report of the generality of men, not only of the brethren, but of those that were without; for a liberal man is universally respected. The Syriac version adds, "and of the church itself;" as distinct from all men, or the generality of the men of the world.

And of the truth itself] That is, whoever speaks truth must give him a good character, for this cannot be understood with any propriety of the Gospel, nor of Jesus Christ.

Yea, and we also bear record] Or a testimony to the character of Demetrius; that is, I John, the apostle, and the saints at Ephesus.

And ye know that our record is true] Faithful, and to be depended upon. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, read, "thou knowest;" as does also the Vulgate Latin version, which seems most agreeable, since this epistle is directed to a single person; compare this with *John* xix. 35. and it will give a further proof of this epistle being the apostle John's.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

I had many things to write] With regard to

churches, and particular persons, and concerning hospitality to the poor brethren.

But I will not with ink and pen write unto thee] Suggesting, he should take away another method of communicating his mind to him, which he next mentions.

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

But I trust I shall shortly see thee] Either at Ephesus, where John was, or rather at the place where Gaius lived, see *1*. 10.

And we shall speak face to face] Freely and familiarly converse together about these things, which were not thought proper to be committed to writing.

Peace be to thee] Which was the usual form of salutation with the Jews, and John was one; see the note on *John* xx. 19.

Our friends salute thee] Or send their christian salutation to thee, wishing all health and prosperity in soul and body; meaning the members of the church at Ephesus: the Arabic version reads, "thy friends;" such at Ephesus as had a particular knowledge of him, and affection for him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "the friends;" the members in general; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "the brethren;" and the Syriac version, "our brethren:" and then the epistle is closed thus,

Greet the friends by name] Meaning those that were where Gaius lived, to whom the apostle sends his salutation, and desires it might be delivered to each of them, as if they had been mentioned by name. This, and the epistle of James, are the only epistles which are concluded without the word *Amen*.

The General Epistle of J U D E.

THAT this epistle was written by Jude, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, and not by Jude the fifteenth bishop of Jerusalem, who lived in the time of Trajan, a little before Bar Cocab, the false Messiah, as Grotius thought, is evident, from his being called in the epistle itself, the brother of James, and which is confirmed by all copies; and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter shews it to have been written about the same time, and upon the same occasion. As to Jude's not calling himself an apostle, but a servant of Jesus Christ, it may be observed, that the latter is much the same with the former, and the apostle Paul sometimes uses them both, as in *Romans* i. 1. *Tit.* i. 1. and sometimes neither, as in *1 Thess.* i. 1. *2 Thess.* i. 1. *Philemon* 1. and sometimes only servant, as Jude does here, *Phil.* i. 1. though in some copies of the title of this epistle, he is called *Jude the apostle*; and as to Jude's making mention of the apostles as if he was later than they, and not of their number, *ψ. 17.* it may be returned for answer to it, that the apostle Peter expresses himself much in the same manner, *2 Pet.* iii. 2. where some copies, instead of "us the apostles," read "your apostles;" see the note there; moreover, Jude seems to cite a passage out of Peter, as Peter in the same chapter cites the apostle Paul, which only shews agreement in their doctrine and writing; and at most it only follows from hence, that Jude wrote after some of the apostles, as Paul and Peter, who had foretold there would be mockers in the last time; and that Jude had lived to be a witness of the truth of what they had said; nor does he exclude himself from their number. And that this epistle is a genuine one, appears from the majesty of its stile, the truth of doctrine contained in it, and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter, and from the early reception of it in the churches. Eusebius (*a*) says, it was reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and was published in most churches; though he observes, that many of the ancients make no mention of it: but certain it is, that several of the ancient writers before him do make mention of it: and cite it as genuine, as Clements Alexandrius (*b*), Tertullian (*c*), and Origen (*d*): and as for the prophecy of Enoch, cited in this epistle, it is not taken out of an apocryphal book, that bears that name, for the apostle makes no mention of any writing of his, but of a prophecy; and had he cited it out of that book, as it was truth, it can no more prejudice the authority of this epistle, than the citations made by the apostle Paul out of the heathen poets, can effect his epistles: and whereas there is an account also given in this epistle of a dispute about the body of Moses, no where else to be met with, supposing it to be understood of his real body, of which see the note on the place; this can be no more an objection to the genuineness of this epistle, than the mention of James and Jambres, who withstood Moses, by the apostle Paul, is an objection to an epistle of his, whose names are not to be met with in other parts of scripture; but were what were known by tradition, as might be the case here. The epistle is called *catholic*, or *general*, because it is not written to any particular person or church, but to the saints in general, and it may be to the same persons that Peter wrote his; see *1 Peter* i. 1. *2 Peter* i. 1. and who seem to be chiefly the believing Jews; see *ψ. 5, 17.* though the Syriac version of *ψ. 1.* reads "Jude a servant of Jesus Christ—*ⲁⲛⲁⲛⲁⲓ*, to the nations or Gentiles, called, &c." the design of the epistle to both, is to exhort them to continue in the faith, and contend for it; and to describe false teachers, to point out their principles, practices, and dreadful end, that so they might shun and avoid them.

The

(*a*) Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 23.(*b*) *Pædagog.* l. 3. c. 8. p. 239. & *Stromat.* l. 3. p. 432.(*c*) *De Cultu Fæmin.* l. 1. c. 30.(*d*) In *Josh. Homil.* 7. fol. 156. E. & *Comment.* in *Matt.* p. 223. Ed. Hunt.

The writer of this epistle describes himself by his name, *Jude*; by his spiritual condition, a *servant of Christ*; and by his natural relation, a *brother of James*; and inscribes it to persons chosen of God, secured in Christ, and called by grace, *ch. 1.* whom he salutes, and wishes a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love unto, *ch. 2.* and then points at the subject matter of his epistle, *the common salvation*; and his view in writing it, which was to exhort them to contend earnestly for the Gospel; which exhortation was necessary, since some reprobate and wicked men, abusers of the grace of God, and blasphemers of the person of Christ, had got in among them, *ch. 3, 4.* and in order to deter them from following their pernicious ways, he lays before them various instances of divine vengeance on sinners; as the Israelites, whom God delivered out of Egypt, and yet destroyed them for their unbelief; the angels, who not content with their first estate, forsook their habitation, and are reserved in chains of darkness to the day of judgment; and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the adjacent cities, who for their uncleanness suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, as an example to others, *ch. 5—7.* in like manner the apostle observes, these false teachers, who were filthy dreamers, defiled themselves with such sins, and also despised and spoke evil of civil magistrates, *ch. 8.* which sin of theirs is aggravated by Michael the archangel not railing at the devil, in a contention with him about the body of Moses, but gently reproving him; by speaking evil of what they were ignorant of, and by their brutish sensuality, in corrupting themselves in things they had natural knowledge of, *ch. 9, 10.* and both their sin and punishment are exemplified in the cases of Cain, Balaam, and Core; being guilty of hatred of the brethren, of covetousness, and of contradiction, *ch. 11.* and by various metaphors are set forth their intemperance, hypocrisy, instability, unfruitfulness, pride, wrath, and lust, for whom the blackest darkness is reserved for ever, *ch. 12, 13.* the certainty of which is proved from an ancient prophecy of Enoch, concerning the coming of Christ to judgment, when vengeance will be taken on those men for their ungodly deeds and hard speeches, *ch. 14, 15.* who are further described by their murmurs and complaints; by their pride, respect of persons, and covetousness; by their scoffs, and walking after their own lusts, as had been foretold by the apostles of Christ; by separating themselves from the saints, and by their sensuality, and not having the Spirit of God, *ch. 16—19.* and the apostle VOL. V.

de having thus at large described these false teachers, by reason of whom the saints were in danger, directs them to the use of means by which they might be secured from them; such as building themselves up in their most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keeping themselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life, *ch. 20, 21.* and he teaches them not only to be concerned for themselves, but for others also, who were in danger from these deceivers; to deal with some in a tender and compassionate way, with others more roughly, expressing an hatred to a filthy conversation, *ch. 22, 23.* and then the epistle is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to the only wise God our Saviour, who is able to keep his people from falling into such pernicious principles and practices, and to present them faultless before his glorious presence with exceeding joy, *ch. 24, 25.*

JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ] The author of this epistle is the same who is elsewhere called Judas, *Luke vi. 16.* and *John xiv. 22.* who was one of the twelve apostles of Christ, whose name was also Lebbeus, and whose surname was Thaddeus, *Matt. x. 3.* the name is the same with Jehudah, *Gen. xxix. 35.* and chap. *xlix. 8.* which comes from a word that signifies to *praise* or *confess*; and in the Rabbinical dialect is called יודה, *Juda (e)*, as here. He styles himself *the servant of Jesus Christ*; see the note on *Rom. i. 1.* though this is a title common to all believers, yet here, and in some other places, it is peculiar to an apostle, or minister of the Gospel; and therefore is used not merely in humility, and to acknowledge obedience to Christ, but as a title of dignity and honour: and the apostle goes on to describe himself by his natural relation,

And brother of James] Not the son of Zebedee, but of Alphaeus, *Matt. x. 2, 3.* and this he mentions partly to distinguish himself from others of that name, as Judas Iscariot, and Judas called Barsabas; and partly for the sake of honour and credit, James being a very great man, a man of great note and esteem, and who seemed to be a pillar in the church, and was called the brother of our Lord, *Gal. ii. 9.* and chap. *i. 19.* an account of the persons to whom this epistle is inscribed next follows,

To

To them that are sanctified by God the Father] Which is to be understood not of internal sanctification, which is usually ascribed to the Spirit of God, but of the act of eternal election, which is peculiar to God the Father; in which sense Christ is said to be sanctified by the Father, and men ordained and appointed to an office, and vessels are set apart for the owners use; *John* x. 36. *Jer.* i. 5. *2 Tim.* ii. 21. the language is taken from the ceremonial law, by which persons and things were sanctified, or set apart for sacred use and service; see *Exod.* xiii. 2, 12. *Lev.* xxvii. 14, 16. and so the elect of God are by God the Father sanctified and set apart in the act of election, which is expressed by this word; partly because of its separating nature, men being by it separated from the rest of the world, to the use and service of God, and for his glory, so that they are a distinct and peculiar people; and partly because such are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness both in this world and that which is to come; so that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine; for though holiness is not the cause of it, yet is a means fixed in it, and is certain by it, and an evidence of it: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "to them that are loved by God the Father;" election is the fruit and effect of love; those that are sanctified or set apart by the Father in election, are loved by him. The Ethiopic version renders it quite otherwise, "to them that love God the Father;" which flows from the Father's love to them.

And preserved in Jesus Christ] Those who are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in election, are in Christ, for they are chosen in him; they have a place in his heart, and they are put into his hands, and are in him, and united to him as members to an head, and were represented by him in the covenant of grace; and being in him, they are preserved by him, and that before they are called, as well as after; wherefore this character is put before that of being called, though the Syriac version puts that in the first place: there is a secret preservation of them in Christ before calling, from condemnation and the second death; they were not preserved from falling in Adam, with the rest of mankind, nor from the corruption of human nature, nor from actual sins and transgressions; yet, notwithstanding these, were so preserved that the law could not execute the sentence of condemnation on them, nor sin damn them, nor Satan, who led them captive, hale them to prison; and after calling, they are preserved not from indwelling sin, nor from the

temptations of Satan, nor from doubts and fears and unbelief, nor from slips and falls into sin; but from the tyranny and dominion of sin, from being devoured by Satan, and from a total and final falling away: they are preserved in the love of God, and of Christ; in the covenant of grace; in a state of justification and adoption; and in the paths of truth, faith, and holiness; and are preserved safe to the heavenly kingdom and glory: their other character follows,

And called] Not merely externally by the ministry of the word, but internally by the spirit and grace of God; so that this is to be understood of a special and effectual call, whereby souls are called out of darkness into light, and from bondage to liberty; and from a dependance on themselves to the grace and righteousness of Christ; and from society with the men of the world to fellowship with him; and to eternal glory, so as to have faith and hope concerning it.

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

In this salutation the apostle wishes for a multiplication of *mercy*, from God the Father, by whom these persons were sanctified: mercy is a perfection in God; and shows itself in a special manner towards the elect, in the covenant of grace, in the provision of Christ as a saviour, in the mission of him into this world, in redemption by him, in the forgiveness of sin, in regeneration, and in their whole salvation; and the multiplication of it intends an enlarged view and fresh application of it, which they sometimes stand in need of, as under desertions, when they want the sense and manifestation of it to them; and under temptations and afflictions, when they need sympathy and compassion; and when they fall into sin they stand in need of the fresh discoveries and application of pardoning mercy to them. Moreover, herein is wished for a multiplication of *peace* from Christ, in whom these chosen ones were preserved; and may design a fresh and enlarged view of peace being made for them by his blood, and an increase of conscience-peace in their own hearts, as the effect of it; and may include peace, and an abundance of it, among themselves, as well as all prosperity, both external, internal, and eternal: likewise in the salutation, *love*, and a multiplication of it is wished for from the Spirit of God, by whom they were called; and may be understood of the love with which God loved them; and which may be said to be multiplied, when it is gradually shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and they are by degrees led into it more and more, and the acts of

it are drawn out and set before them one after another, and fresh manifestations of it are made unto them; as in afflictive providences, after the hidings of God's face, and under temptations: and it may design the love with which they love God, which may be increased and made to abound more and more.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you] The apostle calls the persons he writes unto *beloved*; as they were of God, and by him and other saints; and he signifies his diligence in writing to them: and the subject of his writing was,

Of the common salvation] Which designs either the Gospel, sometimes called salvation, in opposition to the law, which is a ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation, and a means of it; and may be said to be *common*, because preached to all, Jews and Gentiles: or Jesus Christ the Saviour himself, who is also sometimes called *salvation*, because he was called and appointed to it, and undertook it, and is become the author of it; and may be said to be a *common* saviour, not of all men, but of all his people; of his whole body, the church, and every member of it, and of all sorts of men, in all nations: or else that spiritual and eternal salvation wrought out by him, which is common, not to all men, for all are not saved with it, but to all the elect of God, and true believers in Christ; the love of God is common to them all alike; the choice of them to eternal salvation is the same; the covenant of grace, the blessings and promises of it, are equally shared by them; and they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness, and are regenerated, sanctified, and called by the same grace, and shall possess the same glory: there is but one way of salvation, and that is not confined to any nation, family, community, or sect among men. The Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's, and the Syriac version read, "our common salvation;" and two other of Beza's copies, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "your common salvation;" the sense is the same.

It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints] By the faith is

meant the doctrine of faith, in which sense it is used whenever faith is said to be preached, obeyed, departed, or erred from, or denied, or made shipwreck of, or when exhortations are made to stand fast, and continue in it, or to strive and contend for it, as here; and which is sometimes called the word of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the mystery of faith, or most holy faith, the common faith, and as here, faith only; and designs the whole scheme of evangelical truths to be believed; such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity and Sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Spirit; what regards the state and condition of man by nature, as the doctrines of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, the corruption of nature, and the impotence of men to that which is good; what concerns the acts of grace in the Father, Son, and Spirit, towards, and upon the sons of men; as the doctrines of everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, particular redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, pardon and reconciliation by his blood, regeneration and sanctification by the grace of the Spirit, final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, and the future glory of the saints with Christ. This is said to be *delivered to the saints*; it was delivered by God the Father to Christ as mediator, and by him to his apostles, who may more especially be meant by *the saints*, or holy men; who were chosen to be holy, and to whom Christ was made sanctification, and who were sanctified by the Spirit of God; and this faith being a most holy faith, is fit for holy men, and only proper to be delivered to them, and preached by them; and by them it was delivered to the churches, both by word and writing; and this delivery of it supposes that it is not an invention of men, that it is of God, and a gift of his, and given in trust in order to kept, held forth, and held fast; and it was but *once* delivered, in opposition to the sundry times and divers manners in which the mind of God was formerly made known; and designs the uniformity, perfection, and continuance of the doctrine of faith; there is no alteration to be made in it, or addition to it; no new revelations are to be expected, it has been delivered all at once: and therefore should be *earnestly contended for*; for could it be lost, another could not be had; and the whole of it is to be contended for; not only the fundamentals, but the lesser matters of faith; and not things essential only, but also what are circumstantial to faith and religion; every truth, ordinance, and duty, and particularly the purity of faith, and its consistency: and this contention includes a care and solicitude for it, to have it, own it, and hold it fast, and adorn it; and for the preservation of it;

and for the spread of it, and that it might be transmitted to posterity: and it denotes a conflict, a combat, or a fighting for it, a striving even to an agony: the persons to be contended with on account of it, are such who deny, or depreciate any of the persons in the Godhead, the asserters of the purity and power of human nature, and the deniers of sovereign, efficacious, and persevering grace: the persons who are to contend with them are all the saints in general, to whom it is delivered; which they may do by bearing an experimental testimony to it, by praying for the continuance and success of it by standing fast in one spirit in it, and by dying for it; and particularly the ministers of the Gospel, by preaching it boldly, openly, fully, and faithfully, by disputing for it, and writing in the defence of it, and by laying down their lives, when called for: the manner in which this is to be done, is *earnestly*, heartily, in good earnest, and without deceit, zealously, and constantly.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

For there are certain men crept in unawares] These words contain a reason why the doctrine of faith should be contended for, because of false teachers, who are described as being then upon the spot; the apostles, Peter and Paul, had foretold, that they would come, but Jude here speaks of them as in being; wherefore present vigour and vigilance were necessary to be used: their names are not mentioned nor their number, only that there were *certain*, or *some men*; which is done to stir up the saints to self-examination, whether they were in the faith; to diligence, in finding out these men; to vigour, in opposing them; and to care, to nip error and heresy in the bud: and they are said to have *crept in unawares*; either into private houses, as was the custom of those men; or into the churches, and become members of them, being the tares the enemy sows among the wheat; or into the ministry, assuming that office to themselves, without being called and sent of God; and so into the public assemblies of the saints, spreading their poisonous doctrines among them; and also into their affections, until discovered; and so the Ethiopic version reads here, "because ungodly men have entered into your hearts;" and all this was at an unawares, pri-

vily, secretly, without any thought about them, or suspicion of them.

Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation] Or *judgment*; meaning either judicial blindness of heart, they were given up to, in embracing and spreading errors and heresies; so that these are not casual things, but fall under the ordination and decree of God, which does not make God the author of them, nor excuse the men that hold them; and they are ordained and ordered for many valuable ends, on the part of God, to shew his power and wisdom; and on the part of truth, that it might be tried and appear the brighter, and to manifest his people and their graces: or else punishment is designed, even everlasting condemnation, to which some are pre-ordained of God; for this act of pre-ordination respects persons, and not mere actions and events; and is not a naked prescience, but a real decree, and which is sure, certain and irrevocable; is God's act, and springs from his sovereignty, is agreeable to his justice and holiness; nor is it contrary to his goodness, and is for his glory: the date of this act is *of old*; or as the Syriac version renders it, מן תחילת, "from the beginning;" that is, from eternity; see 2 *Thess.* ii. 13. *Prov.* viii. 22. for reprobation is of the same date with election; if the one is from eternity, the other must be so too, since there cannot be one without the other: if some were chosen before the foundation of the world, others must be left or passed by as early; and if some were appointed unto salvation from the beginning, others must be fore-ordained to condemnation from the beginning also; for these words cannot be understood of any prophecy of old, in which it was fore-written, or prophesied of these men, that they should be condemned for their ungodliness; not in *Matt.* xxiv. in which no such persons are described, as here, nor any mention made of their punishment or condemnation; nor in 2 *Pet.* ii. 1—3. for then the apostle would never have said that they were *of old*, a long while ago, before written, or prophesied of, since according to the common calculation, that epistle of Peter's, and this of Jude's, were written in the same year; nor in the prophecy of Enoch, *ch.* 14. for Enoch's prophecy was not written, as we know of; and therefore these men could not be said to be before written in it; besides, that prophecy is spoken of as something distinct from these persons being before written, to condemnation; and after all, was a prophecy referred to, the sense would be the same, since such a prophecy concerning them must be founded upon an antecedent ordination and appointment of God; the word here used does not intend their being fore-

fore-written in any book of the scriptures, but in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; and the justice of such a pre-ordination, appears by the following characters of them.

Ungodly men] All men are by nature ungodly, some are notoriously so, and false teachers are generally such; here it signifies such who are destitute of the fear of God, and of all internal devotion, and powerful godliness; and who did not worship God externally, according to his institutions and appointments, and much less sincerely, and in a spiritual manner; and who even separated themselves from the true worshippers of God, and gave themselves up to sensuality, and therefore their condemnation was just.

Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness] Not the love and favour of God, as in his own heart, or as shed abroad in the hearts of others; for that can never be turned to such a purpose, it always working in a contrary way; nor the principle of grace wrought in the soul, which being of a spiritual nature, lusteth against the flesh, and cannot be turned into it; more likely the goodness of God in his providential dispensations, which is despised by some, and abused by others; but rather the doctrine of grace, which though lasciviousness is not in its nature, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men turn or transfer it from its original nature, design and use, to a foreign one: and they may be said to turn it into lasciviousness, either by asserting it to be a licentious doctrine, when it is not; or by treating it in a wanton and ludicrous manner, scoffing at it, and lampooning it; or by making the doctrine of grace universal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in sin.

And denying the only Lord God] God the Father, who is the only sovereign Lord, both in providence and grace; and the only God, not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, but in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, or heathen gods; and he was denied by these men, if not in words, yet in works: the word, *God*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy and in the Vulgate Latin version.

And our Lord Jesus Christ] As his Deity, or Sonship, or humanity, or that he was the Messiah, or the alone saviour, or his sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness; with respect to either of which he may be said to be denied doctrinally, as he is also practically, when men do not walk worthy of their profession of him; and both might be true of these men, and therefore their condemnation was righteous. The copulative *and* is omitted

in the Syriac version, which seems to make this clause explanative of the former.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "knew all things;" but rather it is to be restrained by the following instance of God's vengeance on unbelievers; which with others is produced, to vindicate the divine conduct in the condemnation of the above persons, and to shew that that is certain, and may be expected, since God has always dealt thus with such persons; and this they knew by reading of the scriptures; at least they had known it once, though it might now be forgotten by them; and they had known it once, for all; they had been perfectly acquainted with it; which is said, lest the apostle should be thought to write to persons ignorant, and rude in knowledge, and to shew that he wrote nothing new and unheard of, and so should have the more weight and influence upon them; and he thought fit to remind them of it, though they had known it: it is one part of the work of the ministers of the word, to put people in mind of what they have known; which is necessary, because of the inattentiveness of hearers, their forgetfulness, and loss of knowledge, and the weakness of some capacities to take in, and retain things; and if the judgment is not more informed hereby, yet the affections may be afresh raised, and grace be drawn out into exercise, and the mind be established and confirmed. The instance follows,

How that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt] That is, the people of Israel, who were the chosen people of God, a special people, above all others, and had peculiar privileges; these the Lord brought out of the land of Egypt, with an high hand, and a mighty arm, and saved them out of their bondage, and delivered out of their oppressions and afflictions: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of, *the Lord*, read, *Jesus*: and yet, though they were a special people, and notwithstanding this wonderful deliverance, and great salvation, he

Afterward destroyed them that believed not] Their carcasses fell in the wilderness, by one judgment, or another, upon them; so that of all that came out of Egypt, but two entered into the land of Canaan:

Canaan: this shows the evil nature of unbelief; and that God will not suffer sin to go unobserved in any; no outward privileges and profession will screen any from divine vengeance; God sometimes makes severe examples of mere nominal professors; nor must false teachers, deniers of Christ, and perverters of his Gospel, expect to go free: moreover, it may be observed that God may do great things for persons, and yet after all destroy them; great riches and honours may be conferred on some, great natural gifts on others; some may seem as if they had the grace of God, and were brought out of spiritual Egypt, and enjoy great mercies and favours, and have many deliverances wrought for them, and yet at last perish.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

And the angels which kept not their first estate] Or *principality*; that holy, honourable, and happy condition in which they were created; for they were created in perfect holiness and righteousness, stood in the relation of sons to God, and were, for the lustre of their nature, comparable to the morning stars; they were among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; were a superior rank of creatures to men, and who beheld the face, and enjoyed the presence of God; but this estate they kept not, for being mutable creatures, one of them first sinning, the rest were drawn into it by him, and so were not what they were before, nor in the same estate, or place.

But left their own habitation] By attempting to rise higher; or by quitting their station and posts of honour, being unwilling to be subject to God, and especially to the Son of God, who was to assume human nature, and in it be above them, which they could not bear; and by gathering together in a body, in another place, with Satan at the head of them; though this may be considered as a part of their punishment, and they may be said to do, what they were forced to; for they were drove out of their native habitation, heaven; they were turned out of it, and cast down to hell; see 2 Pet. ii. 4. And this their habitation, which they left, or fell from, or they were cast out of, is by the Jews frequently called the place of their holiness, or their holy place (g).

(g) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 73. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 14, 23, 27. Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 1. & Sepher Bahir in ibid. fol. 27. 3.

He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness] By these *everlasting chains* may be meant, the power and providence of God over them, which always abide upon them; or their sins, and the guilt of them upon their consciences, under which they are continually held; or the decrees and purposes of God concerning their final punishment and destruction, which are immutable and irreversible, and from which there is no freeing themselves: the phrase, *under darkness*, may refer to the chains, as in 2 Pet. ii. 4. where they are called *chains of darkness*; either because the power, providence, and purposes of God are invisible; so the Syriac version reads, "in unknown chains;" or because horror and black despair are the effects of sin, and its guilt, with which their consciences are continually filled: or it may denote the place and state where they are, either in the darkness of the air, or in the dark parts of the earth, or in hell, where is utter darkness, even blackness of darkness; or that they are under the power of sin, which is darkness, and without the light of God's countenance, or any spiritual knowledge, or comfort: and they are *reserved* in these chains, and under this darkness; or "in prison," as the Arabic version renders it; which denotes the custody of them, and their continuance in it, in which they are kept by Jesus Christ, who can bind and loose Satan at his pleasure; and it shows, that they are not as yet in full torment, but are like malefactors that are kept in prison, until the assize comes: so these are laid in chains, and kept in custody.

Unto the judgment of the great day] That is, the future and last judgment of men and devils, which is certain, and will be universal, and executed with the strictest justice: this is called a *day*, which is fixed by God, though unknown to men and angels; and because of the evidence, and quick dispatch of things, the matters judged will be as clear as the day, and finished at once; and a *great* one, for the judge will appear in great glory; great things will be done, the dead will be raised, and all nations will be gathered together, and the process will be with great solemnity; the thrones will be set, the books opened, the several sentences pronounced, and all punctually executed; the judgment of the great day, is the same the Jews call, *יוֹם הַדִּינִים*, "the day of the great judgment (h)." This account shews the imprisoned state of the devils, that they are not their own lords, and cannot do as they would; they are under restraints, and in chains, and not to be feared; which must be a great mortification.

(h) Targum in Psalm 1. 3.

tification to their proud and malicious spirits : and since this is the case of fallen angels, what severity may be expected from God against the opposers of the truths of the Gospel ?

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them] Admah and Zeboim, for Zoar was spared. This is a third instance of God's vengeance on sinners ; and which, like that of the Israelites, and of the angels, was after great favours had been enjoyed : these places were delightfully situated, and very fruitful as the garden of God ; they were under a form of government, had kings over them, and had lately had a very great deliverance from the kings, that carried them captive, being rescued by Abraham ; they had a righteous Lot among them, who was a reprovcr in the gate, and Abraham made intercession for them with God. But they

In like manner, giving themselves over to fornication] Not as the angels, who are not capable of sinning in such a manner ; though the Jews make this to be a sin of theirs, and so interpret *Genesis* vi. 2, 4 (i). But rather the Israelites, among whom this sin prevailed, 1 *Cor.* x. 8. though it seems best of all to refer it to the false teachers that turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and were very criminal this way ; and then the sense is, that in like manner as they, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, gave themselves over to the sin of fornication ; wherefore these men might expect the same judgments that fell upon them, since their sin was alike ; which sin is a work of the flesh, contrary to the law of God, is against the body, and attended with many evils ; exposes to judgment here and hereafter, and unfits for the communion of the saints, and for the kingdom of heaven.

And going after strange flesh] Or other flesh ; meaning not other women besides their own wives, but men ; and designs that detestable and unnatural sin, which, from these people, is called Sodomy to this day ; and which is an exceeding great sin, contrary to the light of nature, and law of God, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a nation and people, and commonly prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Papists and Mahometans ; and arose from

idleness and fulness of bread in Sodom, and was committed in the sight of God, with great impudence : their punishment follows,

Are set forth for an example] Being destroyed by fire from heaven, and their cities turned into a sulphurous lake, which continues to this day, as a monument of God's vengeance, and an example to all such who commit the same sins, and who may expect the same equitable punishment ; and to all who live ungodly lives, though they may not be guilty of the same crimes ; and to all that slight and reject the Gospel revelation, with whom it will be more intolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrha ; and to antichrist, who bears the same name, and spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt ; and particularly to all false teachers, who besides their strange doctrines, go after strange flesh.

Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire] Which may be understood of that fire, with which those cities, and the inhabitants of it, were consumed ; with Philo the (k) Jew says, burnt till his time, and must be burning when Jude wrote this epistle. The effects of which still continues, the land being now brimstone, salt, and burning ; and is an emblem and representation of hell-fire, between which there is a great likeness ; as in the matter of them, both being fire ; in the efficient cause of them, both from the Lord ; and in the instruments thereof, the angels, who, as then, will hereafter be employed in the delivery of the righteous, and in the burning of the wicked ; and in the circumstance attending both, suddenly, at an unawares, when not thought of, and expected ; and in the nature of them, being a destruction total, irreparable, and everlasting : and this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who say (l), that " the men of Sodom have no part or portion in " the world to come, and shall not see the world " to come." And says R. Isaac, " Sodom is " judged, ברינא רביתא, " with the judgment of " hell (m)."

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh] Which may be literally understood, either of the Jewish doctors, who pretended to be interpreters of dreams, as R. Akiba, R. Lazar, and others (n) ; or of the false teachers in the apostle's time, and of their filthy dreams, and nocturnal pollutions

(k) De Abrahamo, p. 370.

fol. 29. 3.

(l) T. Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 71. 3.

(m) Zohar in Gen. fol. 71. 3.

(n) T. Hieros. Maaser Shen, fol. 55. 2, 3.

(i) Puke Eliezer, c. 22. Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 3. §. 2.

tions in them; which sense the Arabic and Ethiopic versions confirm; the former rendering the words thus, "so these retiring in the time of sleep, defile their own flesh;" and the latter thus, "and likewise these, who in their own sleep, pollute their own flesh;" as also of their pretensions to divine assistance and intelligence by dreams; and likewise may be figuratively understood of them; for false doctrines are dreams, and the teachers of them dreamers, *Jer.* xxiii. 25, 27, 28, 32. as are all those doctrines of men that oppose the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; that contradict the Deity and Sonship of Christ; that depreciate any of his offices; that lessen the glory of the person and grace of the Spirit; that cry up the purity, power, and righteousness of human nature, and are contrary to the free grace of God. These arise from the darkness of the understanding, and a spirit of slumber upon them; are the fictions of their own brain, and of their roving imagination; are illusory and deceitful, and are in themselves vanities, and like dreams pass away. And the dreamers of these dreams may be said to *defile the flesh*; since they appear to follow and walk after the dictates of corrupt nature; and because by their unclean practices, mentioned in the preceding verse, they defile the flesh, that is, the body: all sin is of a defiling nature, and all men are defiled with it; but these were notoriously so; and often so it is, that unclean practices follow upon erroneous principles.

Despise dominion] Either the government of the world by God, denying or speaking evil of his providence; the Ethiopic version renders it, "they deny their own God," either his being, or rather his providence; or the dominion and kingly power of Christ, to which they cared not to be subject; or rather civil magistracy, which they despised, as supposing it to be inconsistent with their christian liberty, and rejected it as being a restraint on their lusts; choosing rather anarchy and confusion, that they might do as they pleased, though magistracy is God's ordinance, and magistrates are God's representatives.

And speak evil of dignities] Or *glories*; the Arabic version reads, "the God of glory:" this is to be understood either of angels, those glorious creatures, called thrones, dominions, &c. or ecclesiastical governors, who are set in the first and highest place in the church, and are the glory of the churches; or else civil magistrates, as before, who are the higher powers, and sit in high places of honour and grandeur. False teachers are injurious to themselves, disturbers of churches, and pernicious to civil government.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

Yet Michael the archangel] By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an increated one, the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears from his name Michael, which signifies, *who is as God*; and who is as God, or like unto him, but the Son of God, who is equal with God? and from his character as the archangel, or prince of angels, for Christ is the head of all principality and power; and from what is elsewhere said of Michael, as that he is the great prince, and on the side of the people of God, and to have angels under him, and at his command, *Dan.* x. 21. and chap. xii. 1. *Rev.* xii. 7. So Philo the Jew (o) calls the most ancient Word, first-born of God, the archangel; in 2 *Esdras* iv. 36. Uriel is called the archangel.

When contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses] Which some understand literally of the fleshly and natural body of Moses, buried by the Lord himself, partly out of respect to him; and partly, as some think, lest the Israelites should be tempted to an idolatrous worship of him; but rather it was to show that the law of Moses was to be abolished and buried by Christ, never to rise more: and they think, that this dispute was either about the burying of his body, or the taking of it up again; Satan on the one hand insisting upon the taking of it up, in order to induce the Israelites to worship him, and Michael, on the other hand, opposing it, to prevent this idolatry; but then the difficulty is, where Jude should have this account, since the scriptures are silent about it. Some have thought, that he took it out of an Apocryphal book, called "the Ascension of Moses," as Origen (p), which is not likely; others, that he had it by tradition, by which means the apostle Paul came by the names of the Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres; and some passages are referred to in some of their writings (q), as having some traces of this dispute; but in them the discourse is not concerning the body, but the soul of Moses; not concerning burying or taking up of his body, when buried, but concerning the taking away of his soul

(o) De Confus. Ling. p. 341. & quis rer. divin. Hæres, p. 509.

(p) Περὶ ἀσχέν, l. 3. c. 2.

(q) Debarim Rabba, fol. 245, 3, 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12, fol. 4, 2, 3. Petirah Moiss, fol. 57, 1. &c.

soul, when he was alive; which none of the angels caring to undertake, at length Samael, the chief of devils, did, but without success, wherefore God took it away with a kiss himself: besides, the apostle produces this history as a thing well known; nor is it reasonable to suppose that such an altercation should be between Michael, and the devil, on such an account; or that it was in order to draw Israel into idolatry on the one hand; and on the other hand to prevent it; since it never was the custom of the Israelites to worship their progenitors or heroes; nor did they seem so well-disposed to Moses in his life-time; nor was there any necessity of taking up his body, were they inclined to give him honour and worship; yea, the sight of his dead body would rather have prevented than have encouraged it: but this is to be understood figuratively; and reference is had to the history in *Zech. iii. 1, 2.* as appears from the latter part of this verse: some think the priesthood of Christ is intended, which was the end, the sum and substance of the law of Moses; and seeing that Joshua, the high priest, was a type of Christ, and the angel of the Lord contended with Satan about him, he might be said to dispute with him about the body of Moses; but this sense makes a type of a type, and Christ to contend about himself; besides, this should rather be called the body of Christ, than of Moses. Others think that the temple of the Jews is meant, about the rebuilding of which the contention is thought to be; and which may be called the body of Moses, as the church is called the body of Christ; though it should be observed, that the temple is never so called, and that not the place where the church meets, but the church itself, is called the body of Christ: but it is best of all to understand it of the law of Moses, which is sometimes called Moses himself, *John v. 45. Acts xv. 21.* and chapter *xxi. 21. 2 Cor. iii. 15.* and so the body of Moses, or the body of his laws, the system of them; just as we call a system of laws, and of divinity, such an one's body of laws, and such an one's body of divinity: and this agrees with the language of the Jews, who say (*r*), of statutes, service, purification, &c. that they are, גופי התורה, "the bodies of the law;" and so of Mishnic treatises, as those which concern the offerings of turtle doves, and the purification of menstruous women, that they are, גופי, "the bodies of the traditions (*s*)," that is, the sum and substance of them: so the decalogue is said (*t*) to be "the body of the Shema,

"or hear O Israel," *Deut. vi. 4.* so Clemens of Alexandria (*u*) says, that there are some who consider the body of the scriptures, the words and names, as if they were, *το σώμα το Μωϋσεως*, "the body of Moses (*w*)."
Now the law of Moses was restored in the time of Joshua the high priest, by Ezra and Nehemiah. Joshua breaks some of these laws, and is charged by Satan as guilty, who contended and insisted upon it, that he should suffer for it; so that this dispute and contention might be said to be about the body of Moses, that is, the body of Moses's law, which Joshua had broken; in which dispute Michael, or the angel of the Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself,

Durst not bring against him a railing accusation] That is, not that he was afraid of the devil, but though he could have given harder words, or severer language, and which the other deserved, yet he chose not to do it, he would not do it; in which sense the word *durst*, or *dare*, is used in *Rom. v. 7.*

But said, The Lord rebuke thee] For thy malice and insolence; see *Zech. iii. 2.* and this mild and gentle way of using even the devil himself, agrees with Christ's conduct towards him, when tempted by him in the wilderness, and when in his agony with him in the garden, and amidst all his reproaches and sufferings on the cross. And now the argument is from the greater to the lesser, that if Christ, the prince of angels, did not choose to give a railing word to the devil, who is so much inferior to him, and when there was so much reason and occasion for it; then how great is the insolence of these men, that speak evil of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, without any just cause at all?

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

But these speak evil of those things which they know not] Which may more particularly refer to dignities, *ψ. 8.* either angels, who are little known, and not at all, but by revelation, and yet were blasphemed, or evil spoken of by these men; either by ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world; or by saying such things of them, as were below, and unworthy of them, as their congress with women, &c. Or civil magistrates;

(*r*) *Mish. Chagiga, c. 1. §. 8.*

(*s*) *Pirke Abot, c. 3.*

§. 18. (*t*) *T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 6. 2.*

(*u*) *Stromat. l. 6. p. 636.*

(*w*) *Vid. Chilon. Disput.*

Tbeolog. par. 1. & 2. De Corpore Moise, sub Praefatio Trigland. Lugd. Batav. 1697.

trates; these men were ignorant of the nature, use, and end of magistracy, and civil government, and so treated it with contempt; or the ministers of the Gospel, whose usefulness was not known, at least not acknowledged by them, and so became the object of their scorn and reproach: or it may refer more generally to the scriptures, which false teachers are ignorant of, and yet speak evil of; either by denying them to be the word of God, or by putting false glosses on them; and so to the several parts of the scriptures, as to the law, the nature, use, and end of which they are not acquainted with; and therefore blaspheme it, by not walking according to it, or by denying it to be of God, and to be good, or by making the observance of it necessary to justification and salvation; and also to the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it, which they speak evil of, despise and reject, not knowing the nature, value, and design of them.

But what they know naturally, as brute beasts] Man originally had a large share of natural knowledge, and there is in man still, notwithstanding the fall, by which his knowledge is impaired, a natural knowledge of God, and of things, natural, civil, and moral; and there is a sensitive knowledge in man, which he has in common with the brutes, and which is here meant: and such was the brutish sensuality of these men, that

In those things they corrupt themselves] And act as brute beasts without shame and fear; yea, worse than brute beasts, as in the acts of unnatural lust, mentioned in *1. 7.* whereby they corrupt both their souls and bodies, and so shall be destroyed and perish in their corruption.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

Woe unto them!] This may be considered as a commiseration of their case, or as a denunciation of deserved punishment, or as a prediction of what would befall them. The Arabic version prefaces these words with an address to the saints, "O my beloved;" that what was about to be said might be attended to, as a caution and instruction to them.

For they have gone in the way of Cain] Which was a way of envy, for Cain envied the acceptance of his brother's gift, and that notice which the Lord took of him; so these men envied the gifts bestowed on Christ's faithful ministers, and

the success that attended their labours, and the honour that was put upon them by Christ, and that was given them by the churches, which shews, that they were destitute of grace, and particularly of the grace of charity, or love, which envies not, and that they were in an unregenerate estate, and upon the brink of ruin and destruction. Moreover, the way of Cain was a way of hatred, and murder of his brother, which his envy led him to; so these men hated the brethren, persecuted them unto death, as well as were guilty of the murder of the souls of men, by their false doctrine: to which may be added, as another of Cain's ways, in consequence of the former, absence from the presence of God, or the place of his worship; so these men separated themselves, and went out from the churches, forsook the assembling together with them, and so might expect Cain's punishment, to be driven from the face of God; yea, to be bid go as cursed into everlasting burnings.

And ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward] Balaam's error which he himself was guilty of, was covetousness, or an immoderate love of money, *2 Pet. ii. 15.* which, as it is the root of all evil, is the bane of religion, and the source of heresy, and what the false teachers were greatly addicted to; and where it prevails, it is insatiable, and not to be checked, and stopped, as in these men; and is a damnable sin, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, as well as is dishonourable to religion; hence such particular notice is taken of it, lest it be found in a minister of the word: this character exactly agrees with the followers of Simon Magus. The error which Balaam led others into, was both idolatry and adultery, *Rev. ii. 14.* which these false teachers were both guilty of themselves, and taught others, and indulged them therein; and which, both teachers and people, ran greedily after. Balaam is one of the four private persons, who, according to the Jews, shall have no part or portion in the world to come (*w*).

And perished in the gainsaying of Core] The same with Korah, *Numb. xvi. 1.* The Septuagint there call him Core, and so does Philo the Jew (*x*), as the apostle does here, and by Josephus he is called (*y*) Cores: now the gainsaying or contradiction of these men, was like Korah's; as his was against Moses, the ruler of the people, so theirs was against magistracy, *1. 8.* which was gainsaying God's own ordinance, and a contradiction of that which is for the good of men; the

ground

(w) Mishn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. §. 2. p. 471.

(y) Antiq. l. 4. c. 2. §. 2.

(x) De Profugis,

ground of which contradiction was love of liberty, and their own lusts; and generally speaking, men perish in their factions and rebellions against good and lawful magistrates: also, as Korah gain-sayed Aaron, the priest of the Lord, so these men contradicted and opposed the ministers of Christ, whom they would have thrust out, in order to put in themselves, and whose persons they reviled, and contradicted their doctrines, which to do is of dangerous consequence; and they might be said to perish in his gain-saying, as a type and example of their destruction, which would be swift and sudden, as his was; and to denote the certainty of it. So the Jews (z) say of Korah, and his company, that they shall never ascend, or rise up and stand in judgment, and that they shall have no part or portion in the world to come (a).

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

These are spots in your feasts of charity] Or love. The Jews speak of, סעודות, סעודות, "of a feast of faith (b)." These here seem to be the *Agapæ*, or love-feasts of the primitive christians; the design of which was to maintain and promote brotherly love, from whence they took their name; and to refresh the poor saints that they might have a full and comfortable meal now and then: their manner of keeping them was this; they began and ended them with prayer and singing; and they observed them with great temperance and frugality; and they were attended with much joy and gladness, and simplicity of heart: but were quickly abused, by judaizing christians, as observing them in imitation of the passover; and by intemperance in eating and drinking; and by excluding the poor, for whose benefit they were chiefly designed; and by setting up separate meetings for them, and by admitting unfit persons unto them; such as here are said to be *spots* in them, blemishes, which brought great reproach and scandal upon them, being persons of infamous characters and conversations. The allusion is either to spots in garments, or in faces, or in sacrifices; or to a sort of earth that defiles; or else to rocks and hollow stones on shores, lakes, and rivers, which collect filth and slime; all which serve to expose and point out the per-

sons designed. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "these are in their own deceivings; spots," *αἰσῶναι*, instead of *αἰσῶναι*, as in 2 Pet. ii. 13.

When they feast with you] Which shews, that they were among them, continued members with them, and partook with them in their solemn feasts, and were admitted to communion; and carries in it a kind of reproof to the saints, that they suffered such persons among them, and allowed them such privilege, intimacy, and familiarity with them.

Feeding themselves without fear] These were like the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and not the flock, and were very impious, and impudent, open and bare-faced in their iniquities, neither fearing God, nor regarding man.

Clouds they are without water] They are compared to *clouds* for their number, being many false prophets and antichrists that were come out into the world; and for their sudden rise, having at once, and at an unawares, crept into the churches; and for the general darkness they spread over the churches, making it, by their doctrines and practices, to be a dark and cloudy day, a day of darkness, and gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and for the storms, factions, rents, and divisions they made: as also for their situation and height, soaring aloft, and being vainly puffed up in their fleshy mind; as well as for their sudden destruction, disappearing at once. And to *clouds without water*, because destitute of the true grace of God, and of true evangelical doctrine; which, like rain, is from above from heaven; and which, like that, refreshes, softens, and fructifies. Now these false teachers looked like clouds, that promised rain, boasted of Gospel-light, and knowledge, but were destitute of it, wherefore their ministry was uncomfortable, and unprofitable.

Carried about of winds] Either of false doctrines, or of their own lusts and passions, or of Satan's temptations.

Trees whose fruit withereth] Or "trees in autumn;" either like to them, which put forth at that season of the year, and so come to nothing; or like to trees which are bare of leaves, as well as fruit, it being the time when the leaves fall from the trees; and so may be expressive of these persons casting off the leaves of an outward profession, of their going out from the churches, separating from them, and forsaking the assembling together with them, when, what fruit of holiness, and good works, they seemed to have, came to nothing; and so were

(z) Mifn. Sanhedrin, ib. §. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 3. Sanhed. ibid. §. 3. (a) T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, f. l. 29. 3. (b) Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3. 4.

Without fruit] Either of Gospel doctrine, or of Gospel holiness and righteousness; not did they make any true converts, but what they made, were like the Pharisees, as bad, or worse than themselves; and from their unfruitfulness in all respects, it appeared that they were not in Christ the true vine, and were not sent forth by him, nor with his Gospel, and that they were destitute of the Spirit of God.

Twice dead] That is, entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding their pretensions to religion and godliness; or the sense may be, that they were not only liable to a corporal death, common to them with all mankind, but also to an eternal one, or to the death both of soul and body in hell. Homer calls (*d*) those, *Adams*, "twice dead," that go to hell alive: or rather the sense is this, that they were dead in sin by nature, as all men are, and again having made a profession of religion, were now become dead to that profession; and so were twice dead, once as they were born, and a second time as they had apostatized.

Plucked up by the roots] Either by separating themselves from the churches, where they had been externally planted; or by the act of the church in cutting them off, and casting them out; or by the judgment of God upon them.

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

Raging waves of the sea] False teachers are so called, for their swelling pride and vanity; which, as it is what prevails in human nature, is a governing vice in such persons, for knowledge, without grace, puffs up; and this shews that they had not received the doctrine of grace in truth, for that humbles; as also for their arrogance, boasting, and ostentation; and for their noisiness, their restless, uneasy, and turbulent spirits, for their furious and wrathful dispositions; as well as for their levity and inconstancy, and for their turpitude and filthiness.

Foaming out their own shame] Wrathful words, frothy and obscene language, and filthy doctrines; and which expresses the issue of their noisy and blustering ministry, which ends in uncleanness, shame, emptiness, and ruin.

Wandering stars] They are called *stars*, because they have the appearance of such, and blaze for a while, in seeming light, zeal, and warmth,

and in fame and reputation; and *wandering* ones, not comparable to the planets, which go their regular course, but to fiery exhalations, gliding, and running stars; because they wander about from house to house, as well as from one nation to another, and being never settled in their principles, nor at a point in religion; and wander also after their own carnal lusts, and cause others to wander likewise, and at last become falling stars; not from real grace and sanctified knowledge, which they never had; but from truth to error, and from a seemingly holy life and conversation, to a vicious one; and from a profession of religion, to open profaneness; and whose fall is irrecoverable as that of stars.

To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever] Or the blackest darkness, even utter darkness; which phrase not only expresses the dreadful nature of their punishment, their most miserable and uncomfortable condition; but also the certainty of it, it is reserved for them among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, by the righteous appointment of God, according to the just demerit of their sins; and likewise the duration of it, it will be for ever; there will never be any light or comfort, but a continual everlasting black despair, a worm that dieth not, a fire that will not be quenched, the smoke and blackness of which will ascend for ever and ever; hell is meant by it, which the Jews represent as a place of darkness: the Egyptian darkness, they say, came from the darkness of hell, and in hell the wicked will be covered with darkness; the darkness which was upon the face of the deep, at the creation, they interpret of hell (*e*).

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam] This was Enoch the son of Jared; his name signifies one *instructed* or *trained up*; as he doubtless was by his father, in the true religion, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and was one that had much communion with God; he walked with him, and was translated by him, body and soul to heaven, and did not see death; *Genesis* v. 18, 22, 24. he is said to be *the seventh from Adam*; not the seventh man from him that was born into the world, for there were no doubt thousands born before him; but he was, as the Jews express

(d) Odys. l. 12. l. 23.

(e) Shemot Rabba, §. 14. fol. 99. 3.

press it (f), יור שבי, "the seventh generation" from him; and they have an observation (g) that all sevenths are always beloved by God; the seventh in lands, and the seventh in generations; Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahaleel, Jared, Enoch, as it is written, *Gen. v. 24.* and this is said partly to distinguish him from others of the same name, and particularly from Enoch the son of Cain, the third from Adam in his line, as this was the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth; and partly to observe the antiquity of the following prophecy of his: for it is said

He prophesied of these] Of these false teachers, and such as they; what would be their sad state and condition at the second coming of Christ to judgment: that he had a spirit of prophecy is evident, from the name he gave to his son Methuselah, which signifies, "when he dies is the emission," or the sending out of the waters of the flood, which came to pass the very year he did die. The Arabic writers (h) call him Edris the prophet; and the Jews say (i), that he was in a higher degree than Moses or Elias; they also call (k) him Metatron, the great scribe, a name which they sometimes give to the angel that went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, and which seems to belong to the Messiah: that Enoch wrote a prophecy, and left it behind him in writing, does not appear from hence, or elsewhere; the Jews, in some of their writings, do cite and make mention of the book of Enoch; and there is a fragment now which bears his name, but is a spurious piece, and has nothing like this prophecy in it: wherefore Jude took this not from a book called the "Apocalypse of Enoch," but from tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the Jews, and therefore the apostle very appositely produces it; or rather he had it by divine inspiration, and is as follows.

Saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints] By the Lord is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ordained the judge of quick and dead, and for which he is richly qualified, bring omniscient and omnipotent, and faithful and righteous, and who will certainly come again to judge the world in righteousness; for not of his first coming, which was not to judge and condemn, but to seek and save, but of his second coming at the last day is this to be understood; and this to be expressed in the present tense,

cometh, in the manner of the prophets, who speak of things future as if they already were, as Isaiah does of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and to awaken the attention of persons to it, as if it was near at hand, as also to signify the certainty of it: and when he comes, he will be attended *with ten thousand of his saints*; meaning either the souls of glorified saints, even all of them, 1 *Thess. iii. 13.* which will come with Christ, and meet the living ones, and be re-united to their own bodies, which will then be raised; or else the holy angels, as in *Deut. xxxiii. 2.* and so some copies, and the Arabic version read; which will be both for the shewing forth of his glory and majesty, and for service in gathering his elect together, as well as for terror to the wicked; and a *behold* is prefixed to all this, to denote the certainty of Christ's coming, and the importance and wonderfulness of it: the ends of his coming follow.

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

To execute judgment upon all] Quick and dead, small and great, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, righteous and wicked, sheep and goats; to pass the definitive sentence on each, that of absolution, life, and happiness on his own people, and that of condemnation, death, and misery on the wicked; which will be done in the most strict and righteous manner.

And to convince all that are ungodly among them] Those who are without God, the fear of him, love to him, or faith in him; who have lived without the worship of him, or in a false worship; and particularly false teachers are here meant, the same as in *x. 4.* who will then be convicted in their own consciences, by that clear evidence, and full light in which things will be set.

Of all their ungodly deeds] Both against Law and Gospel.

Which they have ungodly committed] Which they lived in the commission of, and continually practised in a vile manner, publicly, and in defiance of heaven, and with seared consciences.

And of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him] Either "against God," as the Vulgate Latin version reads, against his being, his perfections, his providence, his

(f) Juchasin, fol. 5. 2. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 1.
(g) Vajikra Rabba, §. 29. fol. 170. 1. (h) Elmacinus, p. 10. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 240. (i) Shet shelet Hakabala. fol. 1. 2. (k) Targum Jon. in Gen. v. 24. Tosephot in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. Juchasin, fol. 5. 2.

his purposes, his word, and worship; or rather against Jesus Christ the Lord, who will come to judge them; against his person and offices, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; his ministers and people, his truths and ordinances.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having mens' persons in admiration because of advantage.

These are murmurers] That is, at others; secretly, inwardly, in a muttering way, grunting out their murmurs like swine; to which, for their filthiness and apostacy, false teachers may be fitly compared: and their murmurs might be both against God and men; against God, against the being of God, denying, or at least wishing there was no God, and uneasy because there is one; against the perfections of God, particularly his sovereignty over all, his special goodness to some, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness; against his purposes and decrees, both with respect to things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; against the providence of God and his government of the world, and the unequal distribution of things in it; and especially against the doctrines of free grace, and the ordinances of the Gospel: and not only are they murmurers against God, and all divine things and persons, but also against men; particularly against civil magistrates, who restrain them, and are a terror to them; and against the ministers of the Gospel, whose gifts and usefulness they envy; and indeed against all men, their neighbours, and what they enjoy, and at every thing that goes besides themselves: it follows,

Complainers] Some join the above character and this together, and read, as the Vulgate Latin version, "complaining murmurers;" others, as the Syriac version, place not only a comma, but a copulative between them; and as the former may design secret and inward murmuring, this may intend outward complaining, in words; not of their own sins and corruptions, nor of the sins of others, with any concern for the honour of religion; or of the decay of powerful godliness in themselves or others; or of the unsuccessfulness of the Gospel, and the decrease of the interest of Christ; but either of God, that he has not made them equal to others in the good things of life, as the Arabic version renders it, "complaining of their own lots;" or that he lays so much affliction upon them more than on others; or of

men, that their salaries are not sufficient, and that they are not enough respected according to their merit; and indeed, as the Syriac version reads, "they complain of every thing," and are never satisfied and easy.

Walking after their own lusts] Which are carnal and worldly, see the note on 2 Peter iii. 3.

And their mouth speaketh great swelling words] Both against God and men; and this may point at their boast of knowledge, their great ostentation of learning, their vain and empty doctrines, their high flights, their rhetorical stile, and bombast language.

Having mens persons in admiration because of advantage] Crying up men of their own stamp for the advantage of the party; and giving flattering titles to men of wealth and riches, for the sake of their money; so the Ethiopic version, "they studied to please persons, to make gain of them;" they were respecters of persons; so the phrase is used by the Septuagint in Deut. x. 17. and chapter xxviii. 50. and in Job xxii. 8. and chapters xxxiii. 22. and xxxiv. 19. and in Prov. xviii. 5. and in Isaiah ix. 15.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

But beloved] Or "my beloved," as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; or "our brethren," as the Ethiopic version; the apostle addresses the saints in this manner, to distinguish them from the false teachers, and to shew that he had a different opinion of them from them; and that he would have them beware of them, and not be surprised at them, since it was no other than what was foretold; and also to engage their attention and regard to the following exhortation.

Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ] These words mean not the doctrines of the apostles in general, but particularly the prophecies delivered out by them, as by the apostles Paul and Peter, concerning the false teachers that should arise; and these being spoken of before, and by apostles, even by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, were worthy of regard, and deserved to be remembered; a remembrance of which is a preservative from error, and a relief in the worst of times, whether of persecution, or heresy. This does not suppose that Jude was not an apostle, only that there were other apostles besides him; and that these, some of them at least, had prophesied of these men, and that he had lived to see

see their predictions verified; nor does he exclude himself from being one of them; yea, the Ethiopic version reads, "which we the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ have formerly declared unto you;" see 2 Peter iii. 2.

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

See the note on 2 Peter iii. 3.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

These be they who separate themselves] Not from sinners openly profane; such a separation is commendable, being according to the will and word of God, to the mind and practice of Christ, and which tends to the good of men, and to the glory of God; but from the saints and people of God; it is possible that a child of God may for a time leave the fellowship of the saints, but an entire and total forsaking of them, and of assembling with them, looks with an ill aspect; nor did they separate themselves from superstition and will-worship, and every false way of worship, which would have been right, but from the pure worship, ordinances, and discipline of God's house, by a perversion of them, and as being above them, or unwilling to be under any notice and government; nor from errors and heresies, and persons that held them, with these they herded; but from the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and ministers of the word, and made divisions and separations among the churches, for worldly ends, and through pride and affectation of vain-glory, as if they were more knowing, more holy, and more spiritual than other men: when they were

Sensual] Such as gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures; and at best were but natural men, who had only natural and rational abilities, but without spiritual and experimental knowledge: hence it follows,

Having not the Spirit] Though they might have some external gifts of the Spirit, yet not the graces and fruits of the Spirit; or he himself dwelling in them, as a spirit of conviction and illumination, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a spirit of faith and comfort, as a spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly glory; they were not under his influence, nor did they feel the operations of his grace, nor had they communion with him: hence they appeared to be none of Christ's, nor could they claim interest in him, and were without life, and so could not persevere.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost,

But ye, beloved] See the note on v. 17.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith] Some copies, and the Complutensian edition read, "our most holy faith;" meaning the doctrine of faith in all its branches, which is holy, a most holy doctrine; which displays the holiness of God, and is a means of beginning and increasing internal holiness in the saints, and of encouraging and exciting them to external holiness of life and conversation: this phrase, *קדושת האמונה* "holy faith," is in use with the Jews (A): and it becomes the saints to build up one another upon this; the doctrine of faith is a foundation to build upon, particularly what regards the person, offices, and grace of Christ, and is itself of an edifying nature; and they should not content themselves with their present knowledge of it, but seek for an improvement in it; and though they were passive when first built on Christ and his doctrines, and though ministers are greatly instruments in building of them up more and more; yet they are capable of building up themselves, and one another; by attending on the ministry of the word, and by private conversation with each other, and particularly by

Praying in the holy Ghost] Which is a special means of increase and establishment in the doctrine of faith: the holy Ghost is the author and enditer of prayer, and an assister in it; without him saints cannot call God their father, nor pray with faith and fervency, or with freedom and liberty.

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Keep yourselves in the love of God] By which may be meant either the grace and favour of God, that love with which God loves his people; and then the exhortation to the saints to keep themselves in it is, to set it always before them, to keep it constantly in view, to exercise faith on it, firmly believing their interest in it; as also to meditate on it, give themselves up wholly to the contemplation of it, and employ their thoughts constantly about it, which is the foundation of all grace here, and glory hereafter; or to preserve themselves by it, for so the words may be rendered, "preserve yourselves by the love of God;"

against

(A) Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

against Satan's temptations, the snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; whenever Satan solicits to sin, and any snare is laid to draw into it, and the flesh attempts to be predominant, saints should betake themselves to the love of God, as to a strong hold and preservative against sin, and reason as Joseph did, *Gen. xxxix. 9.* for the love of God, and continuance in it, do not depend on any thing that can be done by men; nor is there any danger of real believers falling from it, or losing it, since it is unchangeable, and is from everlasting to everlasting: or else by the love of God we are to understand that love with which his people love him, and of which he is the object, *Luke xi. 42.* and then the meaning of the exhortation is, that though this grace of love cannot be lost, yet, inasmuch as the fervour of it may be abated, and the people of God grow cold and indifferent in their expressions of it, it becomes them to make use of all proper means to maintain and increase it in themselves and others; such as are mentioned in the context, as conversing together in an edifying way about the doctrines of the Gospel, and praying either separately or together, under the influences of the holy Spirit, and looking forward for the grace and mercy of Christ unto everlasting life; all which, with many other things, by the blessing of God, may serve to maintain and revive the grace of love, and blow it up into a flame: though perhaps this phrase may chiefly design that love, peace, and concord, which ought to subsist among saints as brethren, and which they should be careful to preserve; and may be called the love of God, just as the same thing is styled the peace of God, *Col. iii. 15.* because it is what God requires, what he calls unto, which is of him, and is taught by him in regeneration; and what his love engages to, and without which there is no true love to him; and he takes love shewn to his people as if shewn to himself; and this sense is favoured by the context, both by the words in the preceding verse, and in the following ones.

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life] The mercy of Christ may be considered either as past, which was shown in eternity, in his covenant-transactions with his Father, in engaging in the cause of his people; in espousing them to himself, and in the care of their persons, grace and glory; and in time, in assuming their nature, in his tender concern for the bodies and souls of men, in bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, in the redemption of them, and in their regeneration and vocation; and there is the present mercy of Christ, in interceding for his people, in sympathizing with them under all their affliction, in succouring

them under all their temptations, in suiting himself, as the great shepherd, to all the circumstances of his flock; and there is the future mercy of Christ, which will be shown at death, in the grave, and at the resurrection, at the day of judgment, and in the merciful sentence he will pronounce on his people; and this seems to be designed here; the consequent of which, or what is annexed to it, and in which it issues, is eternal life; which is not owing to the works of men, but to the grace of God, and mercy of Christ; eternal life is in him, and is given through him, and to his mercy should men look for it. Christ himself is to be looked for, who will certainly come a second time; and eternal life is to be looked for by him; and this is only to be expected through his grace and mercy; and this is to be looked for by faith, in the love of it, with delight and pleasure, and cheerfulness, with eagerness, and yet with patience.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

And of some have compassion] That is, of such who have gone astray, being drawn aside; who are simple and ignorant, and out of the way; who sin through infirmity, and the force of temptation; and who are tractable and open to conviction, and whose mistakes are in lesser matters of religion; as also such who are convicted and wounded in their consciences for their sins and mistakes: and to these compassion is to be shewn, by praying with them, and for them, with ardency and affection; instructing them in meekness; giving friendly and brotherly reproofs to them; expressing on all occasions a tender concern for their good; doing them all the good that can be done, both for their souls and bodies: and good reason there is why compassion should be shewn them, because God is a God of compassion; Christ is a merciful high-priest; a contrary spirit is grieving to the holy Ghost; saints should consider what they themselves were, and what they now are, and that compassion has been shewn to them, and they may want it again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "reprove."

Making a difference] Between one and another; using some more tenderly, others more severely, as the nature and circumstances of their case appear to be. The Syriac version renders the whole, "when they repent, have compassion on them."

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

And

And others save with fear] Meaning false teachers, who lead others into errors, and such as give themselves over unto sin, whether teachers or hearers; and who are obstinate and irreclaimable; even such as these, means should be used to save, if possible, by sharp admonitions and severe language; by denouncing the awful judgments of God, which threaten them; by inflicting on them church censures in a terrible manner; by declaring the terrors of the Lord, and of hell, and of everlasting damnation.

Putting them out of the fire] Of their soul-destroying doctrines, and of their filthy and unnatural lusts; and as it were out of the fire of hell, of which they are in great danger.

Having even the garment spotted by the flesh] By which may be meant the conversation of those men, even their filthy conversation, which is to be hated, though their persons are not; but all ways and means should be used to save them; and this is one way, by showing a dislike unto, and a repentment at their wicked way of living, excluding them from church communion for it, and shunning all conversation with them. The allusion is not to garments defiled by profluous persons, or men of loose women, as some think, but to garments spotted with nocturnal pollutions, or through unnatural lusts, which these persons were addicted to (l). It was reckoned very dishonourable for religious persons, in the time of divine service, or on a sabbath-day, to have on a garment spotted with any thing; if a priest's garments were spotted, and he performed service in them, that service was not right (m); and if a disciple of a wise man had any grease on his garments (on a sabbath-day) he was guilty of death (n).

24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling] The people of God are liable to falling, into temptation, into sin, into errors and mistakes, from an exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in Gospel truths, and even into a final and total apostacy, were it not for divine power; and they are not able to keep themselves. Adam, in his state of innocence, could not keep himself from falling; nor could the angels, many of whom fell, and the rest are preserved by the

grace of God; wherefore, much less can imperfect sinful men keep themselves, they want both skill and power to do it; nor can any, short of Christ, keep them, and it is his work and office to preserve them; they were given to him with this view, and he undertook to do it; and sensible sinners commit themselves to him, as being appointed for that purpose; and this is a work Christ has been, and is employed in, and he is every way qualified for it: he is able to do it, for he is the mighty God, the creator and upholder of all things; and as mediator, he has all power in heaven and in earth; instances of persons kept by him prove it; and there is such evidence of it, that believers may be, and are persuaded of it; and he is as willing as he is able; it is his Father's will he should keep them, and in that he delights; and as he has undertaken to keep them, he is accountable for them; besides, he has an interest in them, and the greatest love and affection for them; to which may be added, that the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in man's salvation, depends on the keeping of them; and what he keeps them from is, from falling by temptations, not from being tempted by Satan, but from sinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him; and from falling by sin, not from the being or commission of sin, but from the dominion of it, and from falling into it, so as to perish by it; and from falling into damnable heresies; and from the true grace of God, and into final impenitence, unbelief, and total apostacy. Instead of you, the Alexandrian copy reads us, and some copies them.

And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy] To himself, in this present state of things, as washed in his blood, and justified by his righteousness, and hereafter in the millennium state, and in the ultimate glory; and also to his Father, and this he died to do, and in some sense did it at his death, even in the body of his flesh through death, and now as the representative of his people in heaven; and will at the last day when he will deliver them up complete and perfect; all which is in consequence of his suretyship-engagements: and this presentation is made before the presence of his glory; either before the glorious presence of Christ, or Christ himself, who is glorious and will appear in glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in his holy angels; or else before the glorious presence of God the Father, and who is glory itself: and the condition in which the saints are, and will be presented, is faultless; though they have sinned in Adam, and were so wretchedly guilty and filthy in their nature state, so prone to backslidings, and guilty of so many after conversion, and though a body

H h h

of

(l) Vid. Sueton. in Vita Neronis, c. 28. (m) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 65. 2. & Zebachim, fol. 12. 2. & Piske Tosephot in Yoma, art. 9. & Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 3. §. 4.

(n) T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1.

of sin and death is carried by them to the grave; yet they will at last be presented by Christ in perfect holiness, in compleat righteousness, and in the shining robes of immortality and glory. The manner in which they will be presented, is *with exceeding joy*; in themselves, for what they shall be delivered from, from sin and sorrow, and every enemy, and for the glory and happiness they shall then enjoy; and also in the ministers of the Gospel, who will then bring their sheaves with joy, and then will their converts be their joy and crown of rejoicing; and likewise this presentation will be with the joy of angels, for if they rejoice at the conversion of men, much more at their glorification; and even with the joy of Father, Son, and Spirit.

X 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

X To the only wise God our Saviour] By whom is meant, not the Trinity of persons in general, nor the Father in particular; but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly God, though not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit; and is the wisdom of God, and the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and is the only saviour of his people; and to him may, as is ascribed,

Be glory] Of his deity, and divine Sonship, of his mediatorial works, and of salvation.

And majesty] Which belongs to him as God, and which he has in his human nature, being crowned with glory, and honour, and enthroned and set down at the right hand of God.

Dominion] Both natural, the kingdom of nature and providence belonging to him, and mediatorial, which is above all, reaches far and wide, and will last for ever.

And power] In making and upholding all things; in redeeming his people; in protecting and defending them, and in destroying his and their enemies; in raising the dead, and judging the world. Though the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "to the only God our Saviour, by Jesus Christ our Lord," and leave out the word *wise*; and so they are to be understood of God the Father; but the Ethiopic version reads, "this is the only God our saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, &c." And all this is to be attributed to him,

Both now and ever] In the present life, and to all eternity.

Amen] Which is an assent unto it, that so it should be; and a wish, that so it may be; and an expression of faith, and strong asseveration, that so it shall be.

The Revelation of S. JOHN the Divine.

THAT this book was written by the Apostle and Evangelist *John*, is clear, not only from the express mention of his name, and from his office, a servant of Jesus Christ, *1. 1.* but also from the character this writer gives of himself, *1. 2.* as being an eye-witness of the essential Logos, or Word of God, and who bore a faithful record of him as such, as John did in his Gospel, in a very peculiar and remarkable manner, and from this writer's being in the isle of Patmos when he wrote, *1. 9.* for of what other John can this be said? to which may be added the testimonies of the ancient writers, as Justin Martyr (*a*), who lived within fifty years of the apostle, and Irenæus (*b*), who was the disciple of Polycarp an hearer of this apostle, and Clemens Alexandrinus (*c*), Tertullian (*d*), Origen (*e*), and others, who ascribe it to him. It was a most monstrously stupid notion of Caius, Dionysius of Alexandria mentions (*f*), that it was written by Cerinthus the heretic, when his heresies concerning the divinity and humanity of Christ are most strongly refuted in it. What seems to have led to such a thought is, that the account of the thousand years reign, and the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven, seemed to favour the judaism of this man, and his carnal notions of an earthly paradise, whereas they have no such tendency. And as for its being written by another John, who is said to be presbyter at Ephesus, after the apostle, it is not certain there ever was such a man; and if there was, he must be too late to be the writer of this book; nor to him can the above characters agree. What is observed in favour of him, that the penman of this book is called in the title John the divine, and not the evangelist, or apostle, will do him no service; for to whom does this character so well agree, as to the evangelist John, who wrote of divine things in so divine a manner, and particularly concerning the divinity of Christ? hence this book was sometimes called *Θεολογία*, *Divinity* (*g*): besides, the title of the book is not original, but is what has been affixed to it by others, and varies; for in the Complutensian edition it runs thus, "the Revelation of the holy apostle and evangelist John the Divine." In the Vulgate Latin version it is called, "the Apocalypse of the blessed John the apostle;" and in the Syriac version, "the Revelation which was made to John the evangelist;" and in the Arabic version, "the Vision of John, the apostle and evangelist, to wit, the Apocalypse." All which acknowledge the apostle John to be the writer of it, and shew the sense of the ancients concerning it. Nor is it of any moment what is alledged, that this writer makes mention of his name several times, whereas it was usual with John, both in his Gospel and Epistles, to conceal his name; since there is a wide difference between writing an history and epistles to friends, and prophecy, which requires the author's name, on whom the authority and truth of the prophecy greatly depend: and so likewise the disagreement of stile observed in this book, with the other writings of John, has no force in it; since the prophetic stile is always different from an historical and epistolary one; and yet, after all, in many things, there is an agreement; John in this, as in his other writings, speaks of Christ as the Word and Son of God, and under the character of the Lamb; and likewise the following passages may be compared together, as chapter *1. 2.* with *John xix. 35.* and *1 John i. 1, 2.* and chapter *1. 5.* with *1 John i. 7.* All which being observed, there is no room to doubt, neither of the writer, nor of the authority of this book; especially when the agreement of the doctrine contained in it, with other parts of the scripture, the majesty of its stile, and above all, the many prophecies of things to come to pass in it, several of which have been already fulfilled, are considered; and though it was called in question, and rejected by some heretical men, because some things in it did not suit with their tenets, yet we have not the least reason

(a) Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 308.

(d) Adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5.

& l. 7. c. 25.

(b) Adv. Hæres. l. 4. c. 37, 50. & l. 5. c. 30.

(e) Comment. in Matt. p. 417. Ed. Huet.

(g) Suidas in voce Ιαωαννης.

(c) Paedagog. l. 2. c. 72.

(f) Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 28.

reason to doubt of its being authentic, who have lived to see so much of it already accomplished, and which could come from no other but God. As for the time of its writing, this is not agreed upon on all hands; the place where, seems to be the isle of Patmos, which yet some question. Some think it was written in the times of Claudius Cæsar (b), before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the title of the Syriac version, this revelation is said to be made to John in the isle of Patmos, into which he was cast by Nero Cæsar. But the more commonly received opinion is, that he had this vision there, at the latter end of Domitian's reign (i), by whom he was there banished, about the year ninety-five, or ninety-six. But be this as it will, the book is certainly of divine authority, and exceeding useful and instructive; and contains in it the most momentous and important doctrines of the Gospel, concerning a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the Deity and Sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Spirit, the offices of Christ, the state and condition of man by nature, justification, pardon, and reconciliation by the blood of Christ; and it recommends the several duties of religion, and encourages to the exercise of every grace; and gives a very particular account of the rise, power, and fall of antichrist, and of the state of the church of Christ in all the periods of time to the end of the world. And though it is written in an uncommon stile, yet may be understood, by the use of proper means, as by prayer and meditation, by comparing it with other prophetic writings, and the history of past times, by which many things in it will appear to have had their accomplishment; and it ought to be observed, that it is a revelation, and not a hidden thing; that it is now not a sealed book, but an open one; and that such are pronounced blessed, that read and hear it, and observe the things in it, chapter i. 3. and which is no small encouragement to attempt an explanation of it.

C H A P. I.

This chapter contains the preface and introduction to the book, and the first vision in it. The preface begins with the title of the book, in which the subject-matter of it is pointed at, a *Revelation*; the author of it, *Jesus Christ*, who had it from his Father; the minister of it, *an angel*; the person to whom it was made known, described by his name, office, and the testimony he bore to Christ, his Gospel, and to whatever he saw; and for encouragement to persons to read, hear, and observe it, happiness is pronounced on them; *ch. 1—3*, the inscription of the book follows, in which are the name of the writer, and the place where, the churches, to whom it is inscribed, were, with a salutation of them; in which grace and peace are wished for them, from God the Father, from the holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ; who is described by characters expressing his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, and by the benefits, favours, and honours bestowed by him on his people, to whom a doxology or ascription of glory is made, *ch. 4—6*. who is further described, first by his future visible coming in the clouds, which will greatly affect the inhabitants of the earth, and then by himself, as the eternal and almighty God, *ch. 7, 8*. and in order to introduce the vision, hereafter related in this chapter, he that saw it gives an

account of himself, by his name, by his relation to the churches, and by his partnership with them in affliction, and of the place he was in; and for what, and of the time when he had the vision, and the frame he was in, and what awakened his attention to it, *ch. 9—11*. and how, that adverting to it he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like the Son of man, who is described by his clothes and girdle, by his head, hair, and eyes, by his feet and voice, by what he had in his right hand, and by what went out of his mouth, and by his face shining like the sun in its strength, *ch. 12—16*. next is related the effect this vision had on John, who upon it fell down as one dead, but was comforted by Christ, laying his right hand on him, and telling him who he was, and bidding him write what he had seen, or should see, *ch. 17—19*. and the chapter is concluded with an interpretation of the mystery of the seven stars, and the seven candlesticks, *ch. 20*.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ] Either of which he is the author; for it was he that sent and shewed

(b) Vid. Epiphani, Hæres. 51.

(i) Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 5. c. 30. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 18.

shewed it by his angel to John; it was he, the lion of the tribe of Judah, that took the book, and opened the seals of it, and which is a very considerable proof of his Deity; since none but God could fore-know and foretell things to come, or declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet, as is done in this book: or of which he is the subject; for it treats much of his person, offices, and grace, and of Christ mystical, of the state of his church, in the several ages of time; or it is that Revelation which was first made unto him, to which sense the following words incline.

Which God gave unto him] Not to him as he is God, for as such he is omniscient, and foreknew whatever would come to pass, and needed no revelation to be made to him, but as he was man and mediator; and this was given him by God the Father, and put into his hands, to make known, as being a part of the administration of his prophetic office: the end of its being given him was,

To shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass] The Arabic version adds, "in future ages;" things that were to be hereafter, the accomplishment of which was necessary, because of the certain and unalterable decree of God, the good of his people, and his own glory; and these were to come to pass quickly, in a very little time; not that they would all be fulfilled in a short space of time, for there are some things not fulfilled yet, though it is sixteen hundred years ago, and more, since this revelation was made; and we are sure there are some things that will not be accomplished till a thousand years hence, and more, for the millennium is not yet begun; and after that is ended, there is to be a second resurrection, and a destruction of the Gog and Magog army; but the sense is, that these things should very quickly begin to be fulfilled, and from thence forward go on fulfilling till all were accomplished. Now to shew, to represent these things, in a clear manner, as the nature of them would admit of, to the servants of Christ, all true believers, that read and hear and diligently observe them, and especially to the ministers of the Gospel, whose business it is to search into them, and point them out to others, and particularly to his servant John, was this revelation made by Christ, who immediately answered this end.

And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John] He who is the Lord of angels, and to whom they are ministering spirits, sometimes sent one angel and sometimes another; and by various emblems, signs, and visions, represented and set before John, a faithful servant, and a

beloved disciple of his, the whole of this revelation.

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Who bare record of the word of God] Of the essential and eternal word of God, his only begotten Son; and John the apostle did in his Gospel, and in his epistles, and also in this book; and which is a clear evidence of his being the writer of it.

And of the testimony of Jesus Christ] That is, the Gospel, which testifies of the person of Christ, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; of his several offices, of prophet, priest and king; of what he did and suffered for his people; and of the blessings of grace which they received by him.

And of all things that he saw] With his bodily eyes, as the human body of Christ, the miracles he wrought in it, the transfiguration of it on the mount, the crucifixion of it, and the piercing of it with a spear, and the resurrection of it from the dead; and also all the visions recorded in this book; and such a faithful witness serves greatly to confirm the authority of this book, and to recommend the perusal of it. The Complutensian edition, and the Arabic version read, "which are, and which shall, or must be hereafter," as in γ . 19.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the word of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Blessed is he that readeth] This book of the revelation, privately, in his closet or family, carefully and diligently, with a desire of understanding it; or publicly in the church of God, and endeavours to open and explain it to others; and may allude to the reading of the law and the prophets in the synagogues, which were not barely read, but expounded; see *Acts* xiii. 15. and chap. xv. 21. and the rather this may be thought to be the sense of the words, since there is a change of number in the next clause.

And they that bear the words of this prophecy] That listen attentively to the reading and exposition of this book, and have ears to hear, so as to understand the prophecies contained in it; for the whole, when delivered to John, was a prophecy of things to come: but some versions read the number alike in both clauses; as either, "blessed

" is

"is he that readeth, and he that heareth," as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; or "blessed" are they that read, and they that hear," as the Arabic version.

And keep those things which are written therein] The last version adds, "concerning this frail world;" who not only read, and hear, but put in practice what they read and hear; for there are some things in this book which are of a practical nature, especially in the epistles to the seven churches; or the sense is, happy are those persons that observe, and take notice of what is written herein, and meditate upon them, and well weigh them in their minds, and retain them in their memories. Now, though eternal happiness does not depend upon, nor is procured by any of these means, as reading, hearing, and observing; yet there is a real happiness, a true pleasure, that does attend these things, which may stir up to a regard unto them; and for which purpose, the following words are added.

For the time is at hand] When these things should begin to be fulfilled.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

John to the seven churches which are in Asia] In lesser Asia; their names are mentioned in *1. 11.*

Grace be unto you, and peace] Which is the common salutation of the apostles in all their epistles, and includes all blessings of grace, and all prosperity, inward and outward; see the note on *Rom. i. 7.* The persons from whom they are wished, are very particularly described,

From him which is, and which was, and which is to come] Which some understand of the whole Trinity; the Father by him, *which is*, being the *I am that I am*; the Son by him, *which was*, which was with God the Father, and was God; and the Spirit by him, *which is to come*, who was promised to come from the Father and the Son, as a Comforter, and the Spirit of truth: others think Christ is here only intended, as he is in *1. 8.* by the same expressions; and is he *which is*, since before Abraham he was the *I am*; and he *which was*, the eternal Logos or Word; and *is to come*, as the judge of quick and dead. But rather this is to be understood of the first person, of God the Father; and the phrases are expressive both of his eternity, he being God from everlasting to everlasting; and of his immutability, he being now

what he always was, and will be what he now is, and ever was, without any variableness, or shadow of turning: they are a paraphrase, and an explanation of the word *Jehovah*, which includes all tenses, past, present, and to come. So the Jews explain this name in *Exod. iii. 14.* "Says R. Isaac (*1*), the holy blessed God said to Moses, "Say unto them, I am he that was, and I am he that now is, and I am he that is to come," wherefore, *YHWH*, is written three times." And such a paraphrase of God is frequent in their writings (*1*).

And from the seven spirits which are before his throne] Either before the throne of God the Father; or as the Ethiopic version reads, "before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ;" by whom are meant not angels, though these are spirits, and stand before the throne of God, and are ready to do his will: this is the sense of some interpreters, who think such a number of them is mentioned with reference to the seven angels of the churches; or to the seven last Sephirot, or numbers in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews; the three first they suppose design the three persons in the Godhead, expressed in the preceding clause, and the seven last the whole company of angels: or to the seven principal angels the Jews speak of. Indeed, in *Tobit xii. 15.* Raphael is said to be one of the seven angels; but it does not appear to be a generally received notion of theirs, that there were seven principal angels. The Chaldee paraphrase on *Gen. xi. 7.* is misunderstood by Mr Mede, for not *seven*, but *seventy* angels are there addressed. It was usual with the Jews only to speak of four principal angels, who stand round about the throne of God; and their names are Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, and Raphael; according to them, Michael stands at his right hand, Uriel at his left, Gabriel before him, and Raphael behind him (*m*). However, it does not seem likely that angels should be placed in such a situation between the divine persons, the Father and the Son; and still less, that grace and peace should be wished for from them, as from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; and that any countenance should be given to angel-worship, in a book in which angels are so often represented as worshippers, and in which worship is more than once forbidden them, and that by themselves: but by these seven spirits are intended the holy Spirit of God, who is one in his person, but his gifts

(1) Shemot Rabba, §. 3. fol. 73. 3.

(2) Targum Jon.

in Deut. xxii. 39. Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 3. & in Num. fol.

97. 4. & 106. 2. Seder Tephilot, fol. 205. 1. Ed. Babil.

fol. 2. 2. Ed. Amsterd. (m) Bemidbar Rabba, §. 7.

fol. 179. 3.

gifts and graces are various; and therefore he is signified by this number, because of the fulness and perfection of them, and with respect to the seven churches, over whom he presided, whom he influenced, and sanctified, and filled, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

And from Jesus Christ] Who, though the second person in the Trinity, is mentioned last, because many things were to be said of him; and who is described in all his offices: in his prophetic office, as he

Who is the faithful witness] As he is of his Father, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; of his truth and faithfulness in his promises, and of his love, grace, and mercy to his chosen; and of himself, of his true Deity, proper Sonship, and perfect equality with the Father; of his Messiahship, and of salvation through his obedience, sufferings, and death; and of all truth in general, to which he has bore a faithful testimony several ways, in his ministry, by his miracles, at his death, and by the shedding of his blood to seal it; by his Spirit since, and by the ministers of his word. Next he is described in his priestly office:

And the first-begotten of the dead] Being the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for though some few were raised before him, yet not by themselves, nor to live for ever, but to die again. Moreover, he is the first-fruits of the resurrection, the pledge and earnest of it, as well as the efficient cause and exemplar of it. This character supposes that he died, as he did, for the sins of his people; and that he rose again from the dead, as he did, for their justification; and that he rose first as their head and representative, and opened the way of life for them. And he is described in his kingly office, for it follows,

And the prince of the kings of the earth] Which is not to be understood figuratively of the saints, who have power over sin, Satan, and the world, through the efficacious grace of Christ, and of whom he is prince or king; but literally of the kings and princes of this world, over whom Christ is king and Lord, who receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and rule by him, and are accountable to him, as they one day must be. Now

follows a doxology, or an ascription of glory to him,

Unto him that hath loved us] His own, his people, his church, his chosen, and who are given him by his Father; these he has loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, which passes knowledge, and will never end; and which he has shewn in espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, assuming their nature, and in nothing more than in giving himself for them as a propitiatory sacrifice, or in dying and shedding his precious blood for them, as is next expressed.

And washed us from our sins in his own blood] Which shews, that these persons were loved before washed; they were not first washed, and then loved, but first loved, and then washed. Love was the cause of washing, and not washing the cause of love: hence it appears, that they were in themselves filthy, and unclean through sin; and that they could not cleanse themselves by any thing they could do; and that such was the love of Christ to them, that he shed his precious blood for them, which is a fountain opened to wash in for sin, and which cleanses from all sin. This is to be understood, not of the sanctification of their natures, which is the work of the Spirit, but of atonement for their sins, and justification from them by the blood of Christ, whereby they are so removed, that they are all fair, and without spot. It is afterwards said, that these same persons are made priests; and it may be observed, that the priests were always washed, before they performed their service, as such (n). The Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "and hath loosed us from our sins in, or by, "his blood;" that is, from the guilt of them, which was bound upon them.

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

And hath made us kings and priests] The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition read, "a kingdom, priests;" and the Vulgate Latin version, "a kingdom and priests;" and the Arabic version, "a kingdom of priesthood;" reference seems to be had to Exodus xix. 6. *and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests*; which the Jerusalem Targum renders, "ye shall be unto me, *מלכות וכוהנים*, kings and priests;" and so the Targum

(n) Milt. Yoma, c. 3. §. 2—6.

Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases it thus, "and ye shall be before me, מלכין kings," crowned with a crown, וכתן, "and priests" ministering. Hence it is a common saying with the Jews, that all Israelites are the sons of kings (a); and sometimes their doctors are called, מלכין, "kings of the law (p):" and they ascribe the same thing to the word of the Lord, as is here attributed to Jesus Christ: so the Targum of Jonathan on *Deut.* xxviii. 13. paraphrases the words; "the Word of the Lord shall appoint or constitute you kings, and not private persons." Likewise they say (q), "that even a Gentile, if he studies in the law, is, ככהן גדול, "as an high priest." All which may serve to shew to what the reference is had in the text, and from whence the language is taken. But the words are used in a higher and greater sense. The saints are made kings by Christ; they are so now; they have received a kingdom of grace, which cannot be taken away; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and all their enemies; and they live and fare like kings, and are clothed like them, in rich apparel, the righteousness of Christ; and are attended as kings, angels being their life-guards; and they will appear much more so hereafter, when they shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years, shall sit upon the same throne, and have a crown of life and righteousness given them, and at last be introduced into the kingdom of glory. And they become such by being the sons of God, which power and privilege they receive from Christ; and so are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with him, and by being united to him. And he also makes them priests to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and those of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit, and even their souls and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, by anointing and sanctifying them by his Spirit; and they are made such by him.

Unto God and his Father.] Not to men, nor to angels. Now to him that has shewn so much love, and bestowed such high favours and honours is the following ascription made,

"To him, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.] The glory of his deity, and of all his offices; of his being the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; and of all the benefits and blessings, favours and honours received from him by his people: and dominion; over all creatures,

and over all his saints, and especially in his kingdom, in the last days, which will be an everlasting one; and which is continually to be wished and prayed for, that it would come, and come quickly. *Amen;* so let it be, and so it shall be.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Behold, he cometh with clouds.] John carries on the account of Christ in his kingly office, one branch of which is to execute judgment; and describes him by a future coming of his, which cannot be understood of his coming to take vengeance on the Jews, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, though that is sometimes expressed in such language, and with such circumstances, as here; see *Matt.* xxiv. 30. and chapter xxvi. 64. because if this revelation was made to John, in the latter end of Domitian's reign, as is commonly reported by the ancients, and in the year 95 or 96, as chronologers generally place it, it must be upwards of twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore cannot relate to that; nor to his coming in a spiritual sense to convert the Jews in the latter day; for this coming is personal and with clouds; when he will be seen by every eye; all which circumstances do not so well agree with that; besides, all the kindreds of the earth will not lament on that account; the wicked will take little notice of it, the tribes of the Jews will rejoice at it, and so will all the converted Gentiles: it is better therefore to understand this of Christ's second coming to judge the quick and dead, which is represented as just at hand, to denote the certainty of it; and a *behold* is prefixed to it, to excite attention, and to denote the importance of it: things of great moment, and very surprizing, will then be done; Christ will appear in great glory and majesty, the dead in Christ will be raised, Christ's personal kingdom will take place, and the general judgment come on. The manner of his coming will be with clouds; either figuratively, with angels, who will attend him both for grandeur and service, or literally, in the clouds of heaven; he shall descend in like manner, as he ascended, and as Daniel prophesied he should, *Dan.* vii. 13. Hence, one of the names of the Messiah, with the Jews, is, אנני, *Anani* (r), which signifies clouds;

(a) *Mish.* Sabbat, c. 14. §. 9. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 67. 1. & 243. 1. & 248. 2. *Reya de chimna* in *Zohar* in *Lev.* xii. 1.

(p) *Shirhashirim*, *Rabba*, fol. 2. 2. *Vide* *Isaiah* in *Psal.* lxxviii. 24.

(q) *Bab. Bava Kama*, fol. 38. 1.

(r) Targum in *Chron.* iii. 24. *vid.* *Beck's Not.* in *ib.* *Yalkut* *Simeoni*, par. 2. fol. 35. 2.

clouds; and his coming is so described, both to denote the grand and magnificent manner in which he will come, making the clouds his chariots; and to strike terror into his enemies, clouds and darkness being about him, thunder and lightning breaking out of them, as tokens of that vengeance he comes to take upon them; as also the visibility of his coming, he shall descend from the third heaven, where he now is, into the airy heaven, and sit upon the clouds, as on his throne, and be visible to all: hence it follows,

And every eye shall see him] That is, every one that has eyes shall see him, or all men shall see him; the righteous shall see him, and be glad; they shall see him in his glory, as he is, and for themselves, and be satisfied; they shall rejoice at the sight of him; they will be filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: but the wicked will see him and tremble; they will be filled with the utmost consternation and astonishment; they will not be able to bear the sight of him; they will flee from him, and call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his face.

And they also which pierced him] His hands, feet, and side, when they crucified him; both the Roman soldiers, who actually did it, and the body of the Jewish nation, the rulers and common people, who consented to it, and at whose instigation it was done; these being raised from the dead, shall see him with their bodily eyes whom they so used.

And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him] All the wicked, in the several parts of the world, will lament, and wring their hands, and express the inward terror and horror of their minds, at his appearing; they will fear his resentment of all their wicked words and actions; will dread his wrath, and tremble at his righteous judgment.

Even so, Amen] Says John, and so say all true believers; what the wicked lament, they rejoice at: they desire the coming of Christ, they love it, look and long for it; they believe it shall be, and wish it may be quickly, as in chapter xxii. 20. This expression of faith in, and desire after the coming of Christ, is signified by two words, the one Greek, and the other Hebrew; suggesting, that this is an article of faith among all the saints of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, and is what they are wishing and waiting for.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is,

VOL. V.

and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

I am Alpha and Omega] These are the words of Christ himself, appearing at once, and confirming what John had said of him, concerning his person, offices, and future coming: *Alpha* is the first letter, and *Omega* the last in the Greek alphabet, and signifies that Christ is the first and the last, as it is interpreted in *Y. 11, 17.* and is a character often given to the divine being in prophetic writings; see *Isaiah xli. 4.* and chapters *xliv. 6.* and *xlvi. 12.* and is no small proof of the proper deity of Christ. *Alpha* is used by the Jews for the chief of persons or things; "Mas and Mezonicha (names of places) are *אלפא*," "Alpha for fine flour;" that is, the best fine flour is there, they are the chief places for it: and again, "Tekoah is *אלפא*," "Alpha for oil," or the chief place for oil; the best oil was to be had there (s): so Christ, he is the Alpha, the chief as to his divine nature, being God over all, blessed for ever; and in his divine Sonship, none, angels or men, are in such sense the Son of God as he is; and in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; he is the prophet, the great prophet of the church, never man spake like him, or taught as he did; he is the most excellent priest, that exceeds Aaron and all his sons, having an unchangeable priesthood; and he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; he has the chief place in the church, he is the head of it, and has in all things the pre-eminence; he is the chief in honour and dignity, is at the right hand of God, and has a name above every name: he also in some sense may be said to be the *Omega*, the last and the lowest; as in his state of humiliation, he was not only made lower than the angels, but than man; he was despised and rejected of men, and scarcely reckoned a man, a worm, and no man; and he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Moreover, these letters *Alpha* and *Omega*, being the first and the last in the alphabet, may stand for the whole; and it seems to be a proverbial expression taken from the Jews, who use the phrase from *Alph* to *Tau* for the whole of any thing, which two letters in the Hebrew alphabet stand in the same place as these; accordingly the Syriac version renders it *Olaph* and

(1) *Mish. Menachot*, c. 8. §. 1, 3. & *Bartenora* in ib. So *Alpha* penultimum, the chief of beggars, in *Matt. 1. 2. Ep. 37.* Vid. *T. Bab. Sabbat*, fol. 55. 1. & *Avoda Zara*, fol. 4. 1. *Echa Rabbat*, fol. 52. 1. *Baal Hattarim* in *Deut. xxxiii. 21.* & *Rasiel*, fol. 9. & 12. & *Yalkut Simeoni*, par. 2, fol. 90, 73a.

and *Tau*; and the Arabic version *Aleph* and *Ye*. So they speak of the children of men who confirm "the whole law, *מלך וזו חזי*, from *Aleph* "to *Tau*;" the same as from *Alpha* to *Omega*, or from one end to the other. So Christ, he is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and last, the chief, the whole of things; as of the covenant of grace, he is the first and last of it, he is the mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and the ratifier and confirmer of it, he is the covenant itself, all its blessings and promises are in him; he is the sum and substance of the scriptures, both of the Law and of the Gospel; he is the fulfilling end of the Law, and he is the subject-matter of the Gospel; he stands in the first verse in Genesis, and in the last of the Revelation; he is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and last, the whole and all in the business of salvation, in the affair of justification before God, in the sanctification of his people, in their adoption, and eternal glorification; he stands first and last in the book of God's purposes and decrees, in the book of the covenant, in the book of the creatures, or creation, being the first cause, and last end of all things, in the book of providence and in the book of the scriptures: likewise, as these two letters include all the rest, this phrase may be expressive of the perfection of Christ, who as God has the fulness of the Godhead, all the perfections of the divine nature in him; and as man, is in all things made like unto his brethren; and as mediator, has all fulness of power, wisdom, grace, and righteousness in him, in whom all the saints are complete; and this may also denote his eternity, he having none before him, nor any after him; and which also is signified by some other following expressions.

The beginning and the ending] The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, leave out this; which seems to be explanative of the former clause, *Alpha* being the beginning of the alphabet, and *Omega* the ending of it; and properly belongs to Christ, who knows no beginning, nor will he have any end with respect to time, being from everlasting to everlasting; and agrees with him as the first cause of all things, both of the old and new creation, and the last end to which they are all referred, being made for his pleasure, honour, and glory: these things now

Saith the Lord] That is, the Lord Jesus Christ; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "the Lord God;" and the Ethiopic version only "God."

Which is, and which was, and which is to come] Who is God over all, was God from all eternity,

and is to come as such; which he will shew by his omniscience and omnipotence, displayed in the judgment of the world: who is now a saviour of all that come to God by him; was so under the Old Testament dispensation, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and is to come, as such, and shall appear a second time unto salvation to them that look for him: particularly this phrase is expressive of the eternity of Christ, who is, was, and ever will be; and of his immutability, who is the same he was, and will be for ever the same he is, and was, unchangeable in his person, in his love, and in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. This same phrase is used of God the Father in *1. 4.* and is a further proof of the deity of Christ; and which is still more confirmed by the following character,

The Almighty] As he appears to be, by creating all things out of nothing; by upholding all creatures in their beings; by the miracles he wrought on earth; by the resurrection of himself from the dead; by obtaining eternal redemption for his people; and by his having the care and government of them upon him, whom he keeps, upholds, bears, and carries to the end, through all their infirmities, afflictions, temptations, and trials.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

I John, who am your brother] Here begins the narrative of the visions and prophecies of this book, the former verses containing a general preface to the whole; and this, and the two following verses are the introduction to the first vision, which John saw; who describes himself by his name, *I John*, the evangelist and apostle; a servant of Christ, and a beloved disciple of his; one that was well known to the seven churches to whom he writes, and who had no reason to doubt of his fidelity in the account he gives them; and also by his relation to them as a brother, not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense, they and he belonging to that family that is named of Christ, to the household of God, and of faith, and having one and the same Father, even God: thus, though he was an elder, an evangelist, yea, an apostle by office, yet he puts himself on a level with the several

veral members of these churches, as he was a believer in Christ.

And companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ] Many are the afflictions and tribulations of the saints: these lie in the way to the kingdom; and they are companions and partners with one another in them, both by enduring the same, and by their sympathy and compassion with each other; and as they go sharers in the troubles of this life, so they do, and shall in the kingdom; in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and priests unto God, and in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will all reign with him a thousand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they shall reign together to all eternity; and in the mean while, they join in the exercise of the grace of patience, of which Christ is the author, exemplar, and object; they are directed by the Spirit of God into a patient waiting for Christ, or a patient expectation of his coming, kingdom, and glory: the Alexandrian copy reads, "patience in Christ;" and the Complutensian edition, "patience in Christ Jesus:" this same person John, who gives this account of himself,

Was in the isle that is called Patmos] But now Palmosa; it is one of the islands of the Cyclades, in the Archipelago, or Icarian Sea, and sometimes called the Ægean Sea, and had its name from the turpentine-trees in it; it is, as Pliny (u) says, about thirty miles in circumference; and it lay next to the churches on the continent, and is said to be about forty miles south-west of Ephesus, from whence John came thither, and to which church he writes first: how he came here he does not say, concealing through modesty, his sufferings; he did not come here of his own accord; Ignatius says (w), "John *ἐξοσδιώθη*, was banished to Patmos;" by Domitian emperor of Rome, as Irenæus says (x), at the latter end of his reign, about the year 95 or 96, and as Tertullian (y), after he had been cast into a vessel of flaming oil, where he got no hurt: and this banishment was not for any immorality, any capital sin he had committed, but

For the word of God] For believing in Christ the essential Word of God, and for professing and bearing record of him, both in preaching and writing.

And for the testimony of Jesus Christ] For the Gospel of Christ, see *1. 2.* for embracing it, adhering to it, and publishing it: it is generally thought that John wrote his Revelation in this

isle, though some think it is not to be concluded from these words, but the contrary; that he had been here, but now was not, but at Ephesus, where he wrote what he had a vision of here.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day] Not on the Jewish sabbath, which was now abolished, nor was that ever called the Lord's day, and had John meant that, he would have said on the sabbath day; much less the Jewish passover, but the first day of the week is designed; so the Ethiopic version renders it, "on the first day;" and is so called just as the ordinance of the supper is called the Lord's supper, being instituted by the Lord, and the Lord's-table, *1 Cor. x. 21.* and chapter xi. 20. and that because it was the day in which our Lord rose from the dead, *Mark xvi. 9.* and in which he appeared at different times to his disciples, *John xx. 19, 26.* and which the primitive churches set apart for his worship and service, and on which they met together to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, *Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1.* and Justin Martyr (z) tells us, who lived within about fifty years after this time, that on the day called *τὴν πρώτην ἡμέραν* Sunday (by the Greeks) the Christians met together in one place, and read the scriptures, and prayed together, and administered the ordinance of the supper; and this, he adds, was the first day in which God created the world, and our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead: yea Barnabas (a), the companion of the apostle Paul, calls this day the eighth day, in distinction from the seventh-day-sabbath of the Jews, and which he says is the beginning of another world; and therefore we keep the eighth day, adds he, joyfully, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and being manifested, ascended unto heaven: and this day was known by the ancients by the name of the Lord's day; as by Ignatius (b), Irenæus (c), Tertullian (d), Origen (e), and others; for it must be some day that was known by this name, otherwise it is mentioned to no purpose, because it would not be distinctive from others; for which reason it cannot merely design the day in which John saw this vision, because the Lord appeared on it to him, for this would not distinguish it from any other day. Some have conjectured that this

(u) Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 13. (w) Epist. ad Tractatus, p. 76.
(x) Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 5. c. 30. (y) De Præscript. Hæres. c. 36.

(a) Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99. (a) Epist. c. 11. p. 244. Ed. Voss.
(b) Epist. ad Magnes. c. 9. (c) Apud Script. Quest. & Respons. ad Orthodox. inter Justin. Opera, p. 662.
(d) De Corona, c. 3. (e) Homil. in Exod. fol. 41. 7.

this was not the weekly Lord's day observed by the Christians, but the anniversary of Christ's resurrection; and so the Ethiopians still call Easter, *Schambatab Crostos*, the Sabbath of Christ: to understand it of the former is best. Now, though John was driven from the house and worship of God, and could not join with the saints in the public worship of that day; yet he was employed in spiritual contemplations and exercises, and was under a more than ordinary influence of the Spirit of God; and his spirit or soul was wholly intent upon, and taken up with divine and spiritual things, with visions and representations that were made unto his mind, which he perceived in his spirit, and not with the organs of his body; he was in an extasy of spirit, and knew not scarcely whether he was in the body or out of it.

And heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet] Which was the voice of the Son of God, as appears by what it uttered, *z. 11.* and is afterwards said to be as the sound of many waters; and it was behind him, as in *Isaiah xxx. 21.* it came to him at an unawares, and surprized him, while he was in deep meditation on spiritual things: and it was a very great one; it was the voice of a great person, of the Son of God, and expressed great things, and was very sonorous and loud, it was like the sound of a trumpet; and this was partly to awaken the attention of John to it, and partly to express the certainty of the relation he gives of what it said; had it been a low, muttering voice, it might be questioned whether John rightly understood it, and whether he might not be mistaken in the account of what he heard; but it being so loud and clear, there is no room for such a doubt.

11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last] These characters, which are repeated here, see the note on *z. 8.* are left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions; but are very fitly retained, to point out the person that speaks; to express his dignity, deity, and eternity; to excite the attention of John, and to give weight to what he said:

And, What thou seest, write in a book] That it

might remain, and be read of all men, and be profitable to the churches in the then present age, and in all future ones.

And send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia] From whence it appears, that not only the seven following epistles were sent to the churches, but that after John had written in a book the account of all the visions that he saw, the whole was sent unto them, for their use and benefit; and who are particularly named.

Unto Ephesus] Which was a city of Ionia, and which Pliny calls (*f*) the work of the Amazons, and the light of Asia; it was famous for the temple of Diana, but more so for having a church of Christ in it: hither the apostle Paul came and preached, and continued for the space of two years; where a very famous church was planted by him, and proper officers appointed, to whom he wrote a very excellent epistle: this is now a miserable desolate place, not a city, but a village; and is called by the Turks, *Aiosalik*: of this place and church see the notes on *Acts xviii. 19.* and chapter *xx. 17.*

And unto Smyrna] Another city of Ionia, so called from Smyrna, the wife of Theseus (*g*), the builder of it; or from Smyrna an Amazon (*h*), the reliques of whose marble bust are to be seen there to this day: it lies about forty-six miles from Ephesus, and is by the Turks now called *Esmir*, and is still a place famous, not for pompous buildings, but for number of inhabitants, riches, and commerce.

And unto Pergamos] This was a city of Mysia, situated by the river Caicus, formerly the seat of the kings of Attalia, and was bequeathed by Attalus their last king, to the Romans: it is famous for being the native place of Galen the physician, and of Apollodorus the rhetorician, master to Augustus Cesar, and for the invention of parchment in it, from whence it seems to have its name: it is now called by the Turks, *Bergamo*, and is almost sixty-four miles from Smyrna.

And unto Thyatira] A city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, formerly called Pelopia, and Euhippia, and now by the Turks, *At Hisar*, or "the white camp," and is distant from Pergamos about forty-eight miles; see the note on *Acts xvi. 14.*

And unto Sardis] This was another city of Lydia, situated at the side of mount Tmolus; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the seat of king Croesus, and is now called by the Turks, *Sart*; and

(*f*) Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.
c. 2.

(*g*) Herodot. de vitæ Homeri,
p. 938.
(*h*) Vid. Miller, Onomasticon, p. 938.

and instead of a famous city, it is now an obscure little village, of mean houses, and scarce any other inhabitants in it than shepherds and cow-keepers, and is thirty-three miles from Thyatira.

And unto Philadelphia. Another city of Lydia, situated at the foot of mount Imolus; it had its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the builder of it; it is now called by the Turks, *Ahah Shahr*, or "the fair city," though there is nothing beautiful or magnificent in it; it is distant from Thyatira about twenty-seven miles.

And unto Laodicea. Another city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, first named Diospolis, afterwards Rhœas, and is now, by the Turks, called *Eski Hisar*, or "the old camp;" and is inhabited by none, unless it be in the night, by wolves, foxes and jackals, as our countryman Dr Smith affirms, in his *Notitia* of the seven churches of Asia; from whom I have taken the account of these cities as they now are, and the rest from Pliny and Ptolemy chiefly.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. The Complutensian edition reads, "and there I turned;" and so the Arabic version; that is, to see who it was that spoke, from whom the voice came, and by whom it was uttered; see *Exodus* xx. 18.

And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. Which represented the seven churches, *x. 20.* in allusion to the seven lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary, *Exodus* xxv. 37. *Zech.* iv. 2. compared to candlesticks, for the use of them, which is to hold forth light; these have none of themselves, but what is put into them, and being put into them, they hold it forth; so the churches of Christ have no light of themselves, but what is put into them; and the light which is put into them, is not the mere light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but the Gospel of Christ; which dispels darkness, and is the means of enlightening sinners, and gives light to saints, by which they walk and work; and this light is put into the churches by Christ, whose the Gospel is, and who is himself come a light into the world; and being put here by him, it is held forth by them, especially by the ministers of it, who are the lights of the world, both by their ministry, and in their lives and conversations: and they are compared to golden candlesticks, because of their excellency, preciousness, and value, in the esteem of Christ;

and for their brightness and purity in doctrine, discipline, and life; and for their splendor, glory, and beauty; and for their stability and duration; and though they are liable to corruption and taint, yet may be melted, refined, and purified as gold.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man. By whom is meant not an angel, for he speaks of himself as a divine person, as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, phrases not applicable to any created beings; and of himself also as having been dead, which angels are not capable of, and of living again, and of living for evermore, and having power over death and the grave, which no creature has; yea, he calls himself expressly the Son of God, *y. 11, 17, 18.* and chapter ii. 18. so that Christ is manifestly designed, who as a divine person, appeared in a form like that individual human nature which was at his Father's right hand; for that human nature of his, or he as the Son of man, was not in the midst of these candlesticks, or churches, but he the Son of God was in a form like to his human nature in heaven; so before his incarnation, he is said to be like unto the Son of man, in *Dan.* vii. 13. to which there is a reference here, and not only in this, but in some other parts of the description; so after his ascension, he in a visionary way appears, not in that real human nature he assumed, but in a form like unto it, that being in heaven; but when he was here on earth, he is called the Son of man, and not like to one; though even such a phrase may express the truth and reality of his humanity, for who more like to the Son of man than he who is so? see *John* i. 14. *Phil.* ii. 7. now Christ was seen by John in the midst of the candlesticks or churches, and among whom he walked, as in chapter ii. 1. which is expressive of his presence in his churches, and which he has promised unto the end of the world; and of the gracious visits he makes them, and the sweet communion and conversation he indulges them with, to their joy and comfort; as well as the walks he takes among them for his own delight and pleasure; and where he is, abides and takes his turns, particularly as a priest, in which form he now appeared, as the antitype of Aaron the high priest, to trim the lamps or candles in the candlesticks, to cause them to burn more brightly and clearly.

Clothed.

Clothed with a garment down to the foot] Which some understand of the righteousness of Christ; this is called a garment, a wedding-garment, the best or first robe, the robe of righteousness; and is fitly compared to one, it being unto, and upon believers, put upon them, and which covers their persons, keeps them warm and comfortable, and beautifies and adorns them; and is a very beautiful, pure, and spotless robe; and reaches to the feet, covers all the members of Christ's mystical body, the meanest and lowest, as well as the more excellent; the weakest believer as well, and as much, as the strongest: but not Christ mystical, but personal is here represented; others therefore think, that this long garment is a sign of gravity and wisdom, it being usual for men of power and authority, and learning, as the Jewish Sanhedrim, scribes and Pharisees, to wear long garments; but it seems rather to design a priestly robe; the robe of the ephod wore by the high-priest is called by this name in the Septuagint version of *Exod.* xxviii. 4, 31. and so it is by Josephus (*i*), who speaking of the hyacinthine tunic, or robe of blue, says, this is *ῥάδιον*, "a garment down to the foot," which in our language is called *Meir*; rather it should be *ῥάδιον Meil*, which is its Hebrew name; and so this robe is expressed by the same word here, used by Philo the Jew (*k*), and by Jerom (*l*), so Maimonides (*m*) says, the length of his garment was to the top of his heel: and in the habit of a priest did Christ now appear; and so he is described in his priestly office, in the midst of his churches, having made atonement for their sins by the sacrifice of himself; and now as their high-priest, had entered into the holiest of all with his own blood and righteousness; bore their names on his breast-plate, appeared in the presence of God on their account, and ever lived to make intercession for them.

And girt about the paps with a golden girdle] As the high-priest was with the girdle of the ephod, which was made of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen, *Exod.* xxviii. 8. and with which the priests were girt about the paps, or breasts, as Christ is here described: it is said of the priests in *Ezek.* xlv. 18. *they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat*; which some render "in sweating-places;" and so some Jewish writers interpret it, which will serve to illustrate the present place; says R. Abai (*n*), upon citing *Ezek.* xlv. 18. "they do not gird themselves in the place in which they sweat; ac-

cording to the tradition, when they gird themselves they do not gird neither below their loins, nor above their arm-holes, but over-against their arm-holes;" the Gloss says upon their ribs, against their arm-pit, that is, about their breast, or paps; and which is still more plainly expressed by the Targum on the above place, which paraphrases it thus, "they shall not gird about their loins, but they shall gird *לברח*" "about their heart;" so Josephus (*e*) says, the high-priest's garment was girt about the breast, a little below the arm-holes. Christ's girdle, as a king, is the girdle of faithfulness and righteousness, which is about his loins; and his girdle as a prophet, is the girdle of truth; but as a priest, it is the girdle of love; it is that which has constrained him to put himself in the room and stead of his people, to assume their nature, give himself a sacrifice for them, and intercede on their behalf: this is like a girdle, round, from everlasting to everlasting; is said to be *golden*, because of the excellency, purity, glory, and duration of it; and because it is very strong, affectionate, and hearty, it is said to be a girdle about the paps, near where is the heart, the seat of love; and this may also depote the power, strength, and readiness of Christ to assist and help his churches in every time of need.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow] In allusion to the white head and hairs of old men, said to be hoary, or like the hoar frost, and compared to an almond-tree in bloom, *Ecc.* xii. 5. and here to wool and snow for whiteness; see *Ezek.* xxvii. 18. and according to the Jews (*p*), *עמר לבן*, "white wool," is the wool of a lamb just yeaned, about which a cloth is bound that it may not be defiled; now these metaphors are expressive of the antiquity of Christ, who is the everlasting Father, and whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting; and of his senile gravity and prudence, for with the ancient is wisdom; he is the wisdom of God, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; and also of his glory and majesty, being the brightness of his Father's glory; and likewise of his true and proper Deity, since this description is the same with that of the ancient of days in *Dan.* vii. 9, for by his head is not here meant either God the Father, who is sometimes called

(i) Antiq. l. 3. c. 7. §. 4.

(k) De Vita Mosi, l. 3. p. 67.

(l) Ad Fabiolam. fol. 19. H.

(m) Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. §. 27.

(n) T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 28. 2. & 19. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 74. 2.

Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Ezek. xlv. 18.

(e) Antiq. l. 3. c. 7. §. 2.

(p) T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 54. 1.

Maimon. & Bartenora in Mishn. Sabbath, c. 5. §. 2.

called the head of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3. nor his divine nature, which is the chief and principal in him; nor his headship over the church; nor do his hairs intend his elect, which grow upon him, and are nourished by him, and are so called for their number, weakness, and purity.

And his eyes were as a flame of fire] See Dan. x. 6. which may design the omniscience of Christ, which reaches to all persons, and things, and is very searching and penetrating, and discovers and brings to light things the most dark and obscure; and also Christ's eyes of love upon his own people, which have both heat and light; Christ's love never waxes cold, and being shed abroad in the hearts of his people, warms theirs; and in the light of his gracious countenance do they see light; and his love like flames of fire melts their souls into a true and genuine repentance for sin: or else, rather his eyes of wrath and vengeance, as set upon his enemies, are here meant; which will be fierce and furious, brings swift and sudden destruction on them, before which there is no standing, and from which there is no fleeing. It is said of Augustus Cesar, that he had fiery eyes (q).

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace] By which is meant, not his human nature in a suffering state; or his people, the meaner and lower parts of his mystical body, in a like state; or his apostles and ministers, who are supporters of his church, and run to and fro with spiritual knowledge, for which, though they suffer much, are permanent and glorious; but either the power of Christ in bearing up and supporting his people, in the care and government and defence of them; or his ways, works, and walks in his churches, and all his providential administrations towards them, which are holy, just, and righteous, and will be manifest; or his wrath and vengeance in treading down and trampling upon his enemies.

And his voice as the sound of many waters] Meaning his Gospel, as preached by his apostles and ministers, which was heard far and near; see Rom. x. 18. and which made a great noise in the world; or his voice of vengeance on his enemies, which will be very terrible, and irresistible.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp

two edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And he had in his right hand seven stars] The angels or pastors of the seven churches, 7. 20: The ministers of the Gospel are compared to stars, because of their efficient cause, God, who has made them, and fixed them in their proper place, and for his glory; and because of the matter of them, being the same with the heavens, so ministers are of the same nature with the churches; and because of their form, light, which they receive from the sun, so preachers of the Gospel receive their light from Christ; and because of their multitude and variety, so the ministers of the Gospel are many, and their gifts different; and chiefly for their usefulness, to give light to others, to direct to Christ, and point out the way of salvation, and to rule over the churches: nor was it unusual with the Jews to compare good men to stars, and to the seven stars. The Targumist (r) says, the seven lamps in the candlestick answer to the seven stars to which the righteous are like. These are led and held in Christ's right hand; which shews that they are dear unto him, and highly valued by him; that they are his, in his possession, at his dispose, whom he uses as his instruments to do his work; and whom he upholds and sustains that they shall not sink under their burdens; and whom he preserves from falling, and so holds them that they shall stand fast in the faith, and not be carried away with the error of the wicked.

And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword] Which designs the word of God; see Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. This comes out of the mouth of Christ, it is the word of God, and not of man; and is a sharp sword; contains sharp reproofs for sin, severe threatenings against it, and gives cutting convictions of it, and is a two-edged one; and by its two edges may be meant Law and Gospel; the law lays open the sins of men, fills with grief and anguish for them, yea, not only wounds, but kills; and the Gospel cuts down the best in man, his wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and carnal privileges, in which he trusts; and the worst in man, teaching him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: or the word of God may be so called, because it is a means both of saving and of destroying; it is the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others; and is both an offensive and defensive weapon; it is for the defence of the saints, against Satan,

(q) Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 3. p. 13. 55.

(r) Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

Satan, false teachers, and every other enemy; and an offensive one to them, which cuts them down, and destroys them and their principles: or this may mean the judiciary sentence of Christ upon the wicked, which will be a fighting against them, and a smiting of the nations of the world; see chapters ii. 16. and xix. 15. and *Psalms* cxlix. 6. which the Jews interpret of the law (1).

And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength] At noon-day; such was the countenance of Christ at his transfiguration, *Matt.* xvii. 2. and designs here, the manifestation of himself in the glories of his person, and in the riches of his grace; who is the sun of righteousness that arises upon his people with light, heat, joy, and comfort; see the phrase in *Judges* v. 31. which the Jewish writers understand of the strength of the sun both in the summer solstice, and in the middle of the day, or at noon, at which time its heat is strongest, and it usually shines brightest; the design of the metaphor is to set forth the glory and majesty of Christ.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

And when I saw him] The glorious person here described, who was just behind him, and of whom he had a full view, being so near him.

I fell at his feet as dead] Through consternation and fear, the sight was so amazing and terrible; the appearance of a divine person in any degree of majesty and glory, has had some considerable effect upon men, even upon the best of men; but John seems to be more affected with it than any, as the vision was the more grand and illustrious: Manoaah was afraid he should die, but did not fall down as dead; Ezekiel fell upon his face, but had his senses; Daniel's comeliness turned into corruption, and he retained no strength, he fainted, and fell into a deep sleep; see *Judges* xiii. 22. *Ezek.* i. 28. *Dan.* x. 8, 9. but John fell down at once, as dead. This panic which good men were seized with, at any more than ordinary appearance of God, or apprehension of his presence, arose from a notion that present death ensues a sight of him; hence Jacob wonders, and is thankful, that he had seen God face to face, and yet his life was preserved, *Gen.* xxxii. 30. and such an effect as here, upon the body, any uncommon discovery of the divine being has, partly through the weakness of human nature, which in its present circumstances is not able to bear the rays and glories

of a divine person; hence the resurrection of the body in power, glory, and immortality, incorruption and spirituality, is necessary to the enjoyment of God and Christ in a state of bliss and happiness to all eternity; and partly through a consciousness of sin, which ever since the fall of Adam has occasioned fear and perturbation of mind, even in the best of saints, when they have had any sense of the divine majesty being near, in an unusual form of glory.

And he laid his right hand upon me] Even the same in which he had, and held the seven stars; and which showed what an affection he had for him, in what esteem he had him, what care he took of him, and what power he would exert in lifting up, strengthening, and supporting him; for he laid not his hand on him in wrath and anger, but in love; and in order to raise him up and revive his spirits, and remove his fears; hence the Ethiopic version renders it, "and he took hold on me with his right hand, and lifted me up;" as he does all who in a spiritual sense fall at his feet; it is always safe and comfortable falling there.

Saying unto me, Fear not] Language which John had heard from him in the days of his flesh, and might therefore be chose now on purpose that he might the sooner know who he was, and be comforted; see *Matt.* xiv. 27. *Luke* xii. 32.

I am the first and the last] A way of speaking used by God when he is about to comfort his people, and remove their fears; see *Isaiah* xli. 4. and chapters xlv. 6. and xlviii. 12. and is used by Christ for the same purpose here; and so is a proof of his true and proper Deity, and is expressive of his eternity, and also of his dignity and excellency: he is the first and last in divine predestination, in the covenant of grace, in creation, in the business of salvation, and in his church, by whom, and for whom, are all things in it; he is the head of the body, the son over his own house, and the first-born among many brethren; and so the Alexandrian copy reads here, "the first-born and the last." *אשר ראשון, ה' ראשון*, the first, is a name of the Messiah with the Jews (2); see the note on *Y.* 8.

18 *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

I am he that liveth] As the eternal God, who has

(1) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 95. 4. & 131. 1.

(2) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 5. 1. Bereshit Rabba, §. 63. fol. 55. 3. Vajikra Rabba, §. 30. fol. 171. 2. & Tosefta Hammot. fol. 71. 4.

has life in himself, originally, essentially, and in-derivatively, and is the fountain and author of life to others; and who ever lived as the mediator and redeemer, and still does, and ever will, yea, even when he was dead as man.

And was dead] He died the death of the cross, for the sins of his people, in due time, and but once; and it was but a short time he was held under the power of death, and will never die more.

And, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen] He was always alive as God, or he was always the living God, and ever will be; and he is now alive as man, and will for ever continue so; and he is alive to God, he lives by him, with him, and to his glory; and he is alive to the benefit and advantage of his redeemed ones, for whom he died; he ever lives to make intercession for them; he rose again from the dead for their justification; their being quickened together with him, and their being begotten again to a lively hope, are owing to his being alive; and as their reconciliation is by his death, so their salvation, or the application of it to them, is by his interceding life; and his resurrection is the cause of theirs: this is very fitly said to John, who was fallen as dead at the feet of Christ, and might be to animate him against the fears of death, or whatever he was to meet with on account of Christ; as well as to make himself known unto him, who had before known him, living, dying, and risen again. The word Amen is left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but is in others, and is rightly retained, either as an asseveration of Christ to the truth of what is before said, or as an assent of John's unto it, who was a proper witness both of the death and resurrection of Christ.

And have the keys of hell and of death] Or "of death and hell," as the words are transposed in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, in the Vulgate Latin, and in all the Oriental versions, agreeable to chapters vi. 8. and xx. 13, 14. by which phrase is expressed the power of Christ over both: his power over death is seen in taking away persons by death when he pleases, the instances of Ananias and Sapphira are proofs of this; and in delivering persons from death when near it, as the centurion's servant, Peter's wife's mother, and the nobleman's son of Capernaum; and in raising persons from the dead, as Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naim's son, and Lazarus, when he was here on earth; and in his raising up his own body when dead, and which will also appear in raising all the dead at the last day: and his power over hell, by which may be meant the

grave, or the place of the departed, and separate souls, or the place of the damned and of the devils, which are there, will be seen in opening the graves at the time of the resurrection, when death and hell, or the grave, will deliver up the dead in them, at his command; and in retaining or sending out the separate souls in *bodes*; and in opening the doors of hell, and casting in the wicked, and destroying them soul and body there; and in shutting them up, that they cannot come out from thence who are once in; and in binding Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and shutting him up there, the key of which he has in his hand; and in preserving his church and people from his power and malice, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. This is an expression of the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ; and is designed to encourage and support John under his present concern and anxiety of mind about the person he saw in this vision: *מפתח של קבר*, "the key of the grave," and of the resurrection of the dead, is frequently said by the Jews to be one of the keys which are in the hands of the holy blessed God, and his only; not in the hands of an angel or a seraph, or any other (*u*).

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Write the things which thou hast seen] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Complutensian edition read, "write therefore the things," &c. meaning what he had now seen, the vision of one like to the Son of man, amidst the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand, and as above described; this was what he had seen *y. 12, 13, 16.* for it does not refer to what he had seen of Christ in the days of his flesh, but to what he had now seen in this representation of him.

And the things which are] The state of the churches of Christ in the apostolic age, and at that time signified by the Ephesian church, and that part of the Smyranean which John lived to see.

And the things which shall be hereafter] From hence unto the end of the world, in successive generations, signified by the rest of the churches, and in the visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials.

20 The

(*u*) Bereshit Rabba, §. 73. fol. 64. 3. Targum Jerus. in Gen. xxx. 21. & Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12. Zohar in Gen. fol. 87. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. f. & Sanhedrim, fol. 113. 2.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand] The sense is, that John was to write the mystery of these stars, or the mystical sense of them.

And the seven golden candlesticks] The mystery, or mysterious sense of them also; for the words are in a continued connection with the preceding verse, and have respect to the following interpretation of them, and to the epistles in the following chapter, which are mystical, and prophetic of the state of the churches in all succeeding ages.

The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches] That is, the seven stars which John saw in Christ's right hand, represent the angels, or pastors of the seven churches of Asia, and in them all the pastors and ministers of the churches in all the periods of time until Christ's second coming. Here it may be observed, that the ministers of the Gospel are not only compared to stars, for which see the note on *ψ. 16.* but likewise to angels, which signifies *messengers*, as ministers are sent forth by Christ with the message of the Gospel, to publish to the sons of men; and as the angels are Christ's ministering spirits, so are the preachers of the Gospel the ministers of Christ, that wait upon him, and serve him in the ministry of the word, and in the administration of ordinances; and there is some agreement between them in holiness, knowledge, zeal, diligence, and watchfulness, in their work; as also they may be so called for the honour and esteem in which they are, both with Christ and his churches; and who like the angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ.

And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches] Represent the seven churches of Asia, and in them all the churches of Christ, in successive ages, to the end of time; the reasons why these are signified by *candlesticks*, see the note on *ψ. 12.* and that they are prophetic of the churches of Christ in the several periods of time, until he comes again, will appear from the following considerations: the whole book is called a prophecy, and a revelation of things that were shortly to come to pass, and it would be very strange, and very unsuitable to its title should the three first chapters contain nothing prophetic in

them; the characters of the divine person under which these seven churches are saluted, as he which is, and was, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, show that the things written to them belong to the Gospel-church-state, from the beginning to the end of it, for what other reason can be given for such a peculiar use of them? the very grand and illustrious appearance of Christ, antecedent to these epistles, when compared with the appearance of God, previous to the opening of the sealed book, and the seven seals of it, may induce one to conclude, that as the latter introduces the book-prophecy in this revelation, so the former introduces the church-prophecy; nor does it seem that such a magnificent appearance is necessary to the bare sending of some letters of advice to some particular churches: moreover, as there are some things in these epistles too common to all the churches and ministers to be restrained to some particular ones, such as Christ's affording his presence among them, signified by his walking amidst the candlesticks, and his care of, and respect unto the ministers of the Gospel, expressed by holding seven stars in his right hand; for can it be thought that Christ only granted his presence to the seven churches in Asia? or that the pastors of those churches were the only ones Christ holds in his right hand? so there are others too particular to certain periods to belong to those churches, as that Smyrna should have a crown of life, Pergamos hidden manna, and a white stone, Thyatira the morning star, and Philadelphia be delivered from a temptation that would reach all the world, and is not yet come; for which no reason can be given in the literal sense of these epistles; and it is strange that only seven churches should be sent to, and these only in Asia; why not to the churches in Africa and Europe? and these churches also, all but Ephesus, very obscure ones; why not to the churches at Antioch, Corinth, Rome, &c. and it is stranger still, if, as Epiphanius says (*w*), there was no church at Thyatira till after the writing of these letters: nothing can account for all this, but their being prophetic, there being something in the number, names, situation and case of these churches, which were emblematical of the state of the church in successive periods of time; to which may be added, that the Epiphonema at the close of every epistle, *he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*, shows, that each epistle to every church is not designed for that church only, but for churches; and for what churches

(w) Contra Hæres. 1. 2. Hæres. 51.

churches but for those who are represented in that period of time, since they must be unsuitable to one another? and besides, this concluding sentence shows, that what is contained in each epistle is something intricate, abstruse, and parabolical, it being only used when some such thing is delivered; see *Matt.* xi. 15. and chapter xiii. 9, 43. There is one observation more to be made, and which runs through all the epistles, and that is, that the names of the several churches, and the titles which Christ assumes in writing to each, as well as the subject-matter of the epistles, have respect to the several distinct periods of the church; all which will more clearly appear in the following notes upon them.

C H A P. II.

This chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. It begins with that to Ephesus, in which the sender of it describes himself by some of his characters mentioned in the preceding chapter; takes notice of some things commendable in this church, *ŷ.* 1—3. reproves her for leaving her first love; gives some advice upon it; threatens her in case of non-repentance; yet notwithstanding commends her for her detestation of some bad practices; and concludes the epistle with a phrase exciting to attention to what is written, and with a promise to them that are constant and conquering, *ŷ.* 4—7. next follows the epistle to the church at Smyrna, in which the sender assumes some of his former titles; takes notice of her works in general, and of her afflictions in particular, and of the blasphemy of others, *ŷ.* 8, 9. fortifies her against a great affliction to be endured, described by its author, kind, use, and duration; and exhorts to faithfulness and constancy, with a promise of a crown of life, *ŷ.* 10. and closes the epistle in the same form as the preceding, promising security from the second death, to the persevering and conquering christian, *ŷ.* 11. and next in order is the epistle to the church at Pergamos, in which the sender takes to him one of the above characters in the description of him; observes her works and place of abode, and commends her faithfulness to him in the worst of times and places, *ŷ.* 12, 13. yet exhibits a complaint against her for having, and conniving at persons of bad principles and practices, called Balaamites and Nicolaitans, *ŷ.* 14, 15. exhorts to repentance, and in failure of it threatens to come and fight against them; and closes the epistle in the same manner as the two former, with a promise of hidden manna,

a white stone, and a new name to him that overcomes, *ŷ.* 16, 17. and the last epistle in this chapter is that to the church at Thyatira, in which the sender makes use of some other titles and characters of his, before-mentioned; takes notice of her good works, and yet signifies he had a controversy with her, for permitting a false prophetess to teach in her, who seduced men to fornication and idolatry, *ŷ.* 18—20. whose impenitence is complained of, and which was aggravated by having space for repentance given her, *ŷ.* 21. wherefore, in case of continuance in impenitence, he threatens both her and her followers with tribulation and death, whereby the omniscience and justice of Christ would be manifest to all the churches, *ŷ.* 22, 23. and then another and better sort of men in this church are addressed, who are described as not having imbibed the doctrine of the false prophets, and as not approving the depths of Satan, or her doctrines of devils; and these are told that no other burden should be laid on them than was, and are exhorted to hold fast what they had, until the coming of Christ, *ŷ.* 24, 25. and for their encouragement to hold on to the end, many promises are made unto them respecting their power and rule over their enemies, and the happy days that they should enjoy, *ŷ.* 26—28. and the epistle is concluded with the usual epiphonema, *ŷ.* 29.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write] OF the city of Ephesus, see the notes on chap. i. 11. and on *Acts* xviii. 19. The church here seems to have been founded by the apostle Paul, who continued here two years, by which means all Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, *Acts* xix. 10. of this church, see the note on *Acts* xx. 17. it is named first because it was the largest, most populous, and famous, and was nearest to Patmos, where John now was, and most known to him, it being the place where he had resided; and it was the place from whence the Gospel came to others, and spread itself in Lesser Asia; but especially it is first written to, because it represented the church in the apostolic age; so that this letter contains the things which are, chap. i. 19. and in its very name, to the state of this church in Ephesus, there may be an allusion; either to *ἐπιθυμία*, *epithymia*, which signifies *desire*, and may be expressive of the fervent love of that pure and apostolical church

to Jesus Christ at the beginning of it; their eager desire after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; after his word and ordinances, and the maintaining of the purity of them; after the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as well as after fellowship with the saints, and the spiritual welfare of each other: the allusion may be also to *aphesis*, *aphefis*, which signifies *remission*, or an abatement; and so may point out the remission and decay of the first love of these primitive christians, towards the close of this state; of the abatement of the fervency of it, of which complaint is made in this epistle, and not without cause. This epistle is inscribed to the angel of this church, or the pastor of it; why ministers are called angels, see the note on chap. i. 20. some think this was Timothy, whom the apostle Paul sent thither, and desired him to continue there, 1 *Tim.* i. 3. there was one Onesimus bishop of Ephesus, when Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, of whom he makes mention in his epistle (x) to the Ephesians, and bids fair to be this angel; though if any credit could be given to the Apostolical Constitutions (y), the bishop of this place was one John, who is said to be ordained by the apostle John, and is thought to be the same with John the elder (z), the master of Papias; but though only one is mentioned, yet all the elders of this church, for there were more than one, see *Acts* xx. 17. are included; and not they only, but the whole church over whom they presided; for what was written was ordered to be sent to the church, and was sent by John, see chapter i. 4, 11. the letter was sent to the pastor, or pastors, to the whole body of ministers, by them to be communicated to the church; and not only to this particular church, did this letter, and the contents of it belong, but to all the churches of Christ within the period of the apostolic age, as may be concluded from y. 7.

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand] The Syriac version reads, "that holds all things, and these seven stars in his right hand;" for the explanation of this character of Christ, see the note on chapter i. 16. only let it be observed how suitably this is prefixed to the church at Ephesus, and which represents the state of the churches in the times of the apostles; in which place, and during which interval, our Lord remarkably held his ministering servants as stars in his right hand; he held and protected the apostle Paul for two years in this place, and preserved him and his companions safe amidst the uproar raised by Demetrius the silver-

smith about them; here also he protected Timothy at a time when there were many adversaries, and kept the elders of this church pure, notwithstanding the erroneous persons that rose up among them; and last of all the apostle John, who here resided, and died in peace, notwithstanding the rage and fury of his persecutors: likewise Christ in a very visible manner held all his faithful ministers during this period in his right-hand, safe and secure, until they had done the work they were sent about, and preserved them in purity of doctrine and conversation; so that their light in both respects shone brightly before men. Moreover, as this title of Christ is prefixed to the epistle to the first of the churches, and its pastor or pastors, it may be considered as relating to, and holding good of all the ministers of the Gospel and pastors of the other churches; and likewise of all the churches in successive ages to the end of the world, as the following one also refers to all the churches themselves.

Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks] See the notes on chapter i. 12, 13. Christ was not only present with, and took his walks in this church at Ephesus, but in all the churches of that period, comparable to candlesticks, which held forth the light of the Gospel, and that in order as the antitype of Aaron, to trim these lamps, and likewise in all his churches to the end of the world; see *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

I know thy works] The good works, both of ministers and churches; no evil works are mentioned, nor any thing complained of in this church, but an abatement of the fervour of her first love. Christ, as the omniscient God, knows all the works of his people, and the springs, and principles, and ends, and views of them, whether they are done in obedience to him, and spring from love to him, and are performed in his strength, and by his grace, and are directed to his glory; and such he takes notice of, approves of, and is well-pleased with, not as the ground of his delight in their persons, but as the fruits of his own grace; and during the apostolic age, churches and ministers were very diligent in working; yea, they were laborious, as follows.

And thy labour] Particularly the labour of ministers of the Gospel, in these times, in the frequent

(x) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 36.

(y) Euseb. ibid. c. 35.

(z) Lib. vii. c. 46.

quent preaching of it, in season, and out of season; and in the constant administration of the ordinances; and in the diligent exercise of church-discipline. The work of the ministry is a laborious work, to the mind in studying, and to the body in the outward discharge of it; and it becomes more so, through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends; and such as are diligent and laborious deserve respect, even double honour; and though they may not have it from men, yet Christ takes notice of them, and their labours, and commends them for them, and will reward them.

And thy patience] As this may refer to the ministers of the word, it may denote their patience in suffering reproaches and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which they bore patiently, cheerfully, and constantly; and in bearing the infirmities of weak saints, in their several communities; and in reclaiming and restoring persons out of the way; and in waiting for the success of their ministry, and their continuance and perseverance in it. And as this may respect members of churches, it may point at their patience under afflictions from the hand of God, and under reproach and persecution from men, for their embracing and professing the Gospel; and their patient waiting for the heavenly glory, and their firm expectation of it, and their perseverance unto it.

And how thou canst not bear them which are evil] That were so either in their principles, or in their practices, or both; men that lived immoral lives, and held erroneous doctrines, these the primitive ministers and churches could not bear; they had an inward abhorrence and detestation of them in their minds; they could not bear them in communion with them; they admonished them according to the nature of their offence, and cast out such as were obstinate and incorrigible; they withdrew from such as were disorderly, and rejected heretics after the first and second admonition; their zeal for church discipline is here taken notice of to their commendation.

And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars] This doubtless was done in the church at Ephesus, where, after the apostle Paul's departure, grievous wolves, in sheeps clothing, entered, and men arose from among themselves, speaking perverse things, *Acts* xx. 29, 30. yet it was not peculiar to that church, though it was to the apostolic age; for in no other could men, with any face, pretend to be the apostles of Christ; and such there were, who sprung up in the several churches

at Jerusalem, Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, who called themselves the apostles of Christ, but were false apostles, deceitful workers; they pretended to have their doctrine, call, mission, and commission immediately from Christ, as the true apostles had, and a power to work miracles, and talked of inspirations and revelations by the Spirit of God. Now the apostles, ministers, and churches of those times tried their pretensions and doctrines by the word of God, and by the fruits, which they produced in themselves, and others; and through that discerning of spirits, which they had, they found them to be liars; that they were not, nor had they what they pretended to be, and have, and exposed them as such.

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

And hast borne] Not evil men, nor false apostles, but *burdens*, as the Ethiopic version reads, and as the word signifies; meaning afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, which pressed sore, and lay heavy on these ministers and churches; and yet they bore them with constancy and cheerfulness, and were not moved by them. The Arabic version reads, "and thou hast borne me;" my name and Gospel, among the Gentiles, and carried it from place to place; see *Acts* ix. 15.

And hast patience] Which they had from God, as his gift, and which they had in their hearts, and in exercise, and found it useful to them. It was in exercise in a suitable time, and it continued with them; it was not worn out through the length and greatness of their trials.

And for my name's sake hast laboured] Which may refer either to enduring sufferings in Christ's name's sake, for his Gospel's sake, for righteousness sake, for the sake of the elect, and for the sake of the honour, glory, and interest of Christ; or to labouring in the ministry, not for filthy lucre sake, nor for party sake, but for the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and there never was an interval, in which this was more true.

And hast not fainted] So as to sink under the burden borne; to have patience quite tired out; to be weary of labouring for Christ's name's sake; and so as to give out, and quit the service of Christ.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee] So the Jews represent God saying, concerning their fathers, Abraham, &c. *וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ*, "I have somewhat against them." *וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ* is the Hebrew for "I have somewhat against them."

"something against them (a)." Christ has nothing against his people, his faithful ministers, and true churches, in a judicial way, or to their condemnation, for there is none to them that are in him; but he has often many things to complain of in them, and to rebuke and chastise them for, in a way of providence: and what he had against the church at Ephesus, and against the churches in the period which that represents, follows.

Because thou hast left thy first love] By which is meant, not hospitality to strangers, or an affectionate care of the poor of the church, or a zealous concern to feed the flock, and maintain church-discipline; but the love of the saints to God, and Christ, and one another, which appeared at the beginning of this church-state, when they were all of one heart, and one soul, as generally at first conversion love is the warmest; and so it was at the first planting of Gospel-churches, and therefore here called first love. Now this, though it was not lost, for the true grace of love can never be lost, yet it was left; it abated in its heat and fervour; there was a remissness in the exercise of it; what our Lord had foretold should be before the destruction of Jerusalem, was fulfilled in this period of time, *the love of many waxed cold*, Matt. xxiv. 12. through the prevalence of corruption in some; and through an over-love to the world, as in Demas and others; and through a desire of ease and freedom from reproach and persecution; and through the introduction of errors, which damp the heat of love, and spirit of religion; and through the contentions and divisions among themselves, as at Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, which greatly weakened their love to one another, and to divine things; and which was very displeasing to Christ, who, for the restoring of them, gives the following advice. Compare with this 2 Tim. i. 15.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen] Believers cannot totally and finally fall away from the grace which they have received; but they may fall into sin, and from a degree of grace, and the exercise of it, as these first and pure churches did, from some degree of their love to God, and Christ, and one another; and therefore are called

upon to remember, mind, and observe from what degree of it they were fallen; in order to bring them under a conviction, and acknowledgment of their evil, and a sense of their present state, and to quicken their desires after a restoration to their former one.

And repent] Of their coldness and lukewarmness, of the remissness of their love, and of those evils which brought it upon them.

And do the first works] Of faith and love, with the like zeal and fervour, which will shew the repentance to be sincere and genuine; so the Arabic version reads, "and exercise the former works, to wit, charity or love." The Jews have a saying (b), "if a man repents, do not say to him, 'remember, מעמך הראשונים, thy first works;' which they seem to understand of evil works; but former good works are to be remembered and done, to shew the truth of repentance for evil ones.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly] Not in a spiritual way, to pay a love-visit, nor in a judicial way, to take vengeance, or inflict punishment, but in a providential way, to rebuke and chastize.

And will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent] Or thee out of the candlestick, the pastor from the church, either by persecution, or by death; or else the church, and church-state itself, signified by a candlestick; see the note on chap. i. 12. and may design a shaking and an unsettling of it, which is sometimes done by violent persecutions, and by false teachers, and their doctrines, and by the divisions and contentions of saints among themselves; and by the former particularly was there a change made in the state of this apostolic church, when it passed into the Smyranean one, which was a period of great persecution and distress; for this cannot be understood of the total removing of the church-state itself quickly, no not of Ephesus itself; for though there is not now indeed, nor has there been for many hundred years, a church of Christ in that place, yet there was one till the times of Constantine, when there was none in any of the other seven cities, and a long time after; see the note on Acts xx. 17. which shews, that this was not a commination to that church literally, but to the state of the church, which that represented; nor does it intend the utter abolition of that church, for the apostolic church still continued, though it ceased to be in the circumstances it was before.

But

(a) Pefkta Rabbati apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 69. 4.

(b) Mifn. Bava Metzin, c. 4. §. 10.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans] Though these christians had left their first love, yet they bore an hatred to the filthy and impure practices of some men, who were called Nicolaitans; who committed fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness, and had their wives in common, and also eat things offered to idols; who were so called, as some think (c), from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons in *Acts* vi. 5. though as to Nicolas himself, it is said (d), that he lived with his own lawful married wife, and no other, and that his daughters continued virgins all their days, and his son incorrupt; and that these men, so called, only shrouded themselves under his name, and abused a saying or action of his, or both, to patronize their wicked deeds: he had used to advise, *παρὰ τῶν ἰδωλῶν*, by which he meant a restraining of all carnal and unlawful lusts; but these men interpreted it of an indulgence in them, and so gave themselves up to all uncleanness; and whereas, he having a beautiful wife, and being charged with jealousy, in order to clear himself of it, he brought her forth, and gave free liberty to any person to marry her as would; which indiscreet action of his these men chose to understand, as allowing of community of wives. Dr Lightfoot conjectures, that these Nicolaitans were not called so from any man, but from the word, *נִיכּוֹלַי*, Nicolai, "let us eat," which they often used, to encourage each other to eat things offered to idols. However this be, it is certain that there were such a sett of men, whose deeds were hateful; but neither their principles nor their practices obtained much in this period of time, though they afterwards did; see *1*. 15. Professors of the christian religion in general abhorred such impure notions and deeds, as they were by Christ.

Which I also hate] All sin is hateful to Christ, being contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his Gospel; and whatever is hateful to him, should be to his people; and where grace is, sin will be hateful, both in themselves, and others; and mens deeds may be hated, when their persons are not; and hatred of sin is taken notice of by Christ, with a commendation.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear

what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

He that hath an ear] Such who have new ears given them, as all have, who are made new creatures; such who have their ears circumcised, and opened by the Spirit of God; who hear with understanding, affection, and faith; who try what they hear, and approve, embrace, and retain that which is good.

Let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches] Let such hearken, and listen with attention to what is said by the Spirit, in what goes before, and follows after, in this epistle, designed for the use of all the churches; from whence it appears, that this epistle was endited by the Spirit of God, and is of divine inspiration; that it was not intended for the single use of the church at Ephesus, but of all the churches; and not of the seven churches only, though the Alexandrian copy reads, "to the seven churches;" but of all the churches in that period of time, which the Ephesine church represents; and which may also be useful to the churches of Christ in all other ages and periods of time. And moreover, it may be concluded from hence, that there are in this epistle, and so in all the rest, for the same words are subjoined to them all, some things which are parabolical and prophetic, and not obvious to every one's understanding and view; for a like expression is used by our Lord, when he had delivered any thing in a parabolical way, or was obscure; see *Matt.* xi. 15. and chap. xiii. 9.

To him that overcometh] The false apostles, false teachers, and their doctrines; coldness, lukewarmness, and remissness in love; the impure tenets and practices of the Nicolaitans.

Will I give to eat of the tree of life] By which is meant Jesus Christ himself, in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden; and is so called, because he is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and because of his fruit, the blessings of life and grace, that are in him, of which believers may eat by faith, and which they find to be soul-quickenings, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying; and which are Christ's gift to them, even both the food they eat, and the faith by which they eat, are his gifts. So Christ, under the name of wisdom, is called the tree of life, in *Prov.* iii. 18. and this is a name which is sometimes given by the Jews to the Messiah (e).

Which

(c) Vid. *Trenzeum adv. Hæres.* l. 1. c. 27. & *Tertull. de Præscript. Hæret.* c. 46, 47. (d) *Clement. Alex. Strom.* l. 3. p. 436. & *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* l. 3. c. 29.

(e) *Zohar in Gen.* fol. 33. 3.

Which is in the midst of the paradise of God] As the tree of life was in the garden of Eden, Gen. ii. 9. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "the paradise of my God;" the God of Christ, as well as of his people; and by which may be meant, either the church on earth, which is as a paradise, Cant. iv. 12. in the midst of which Christ is, affording his gracious presence, and reaching forth his grace, and the benefits of it, to his people; or heaven, see the note on 2 Cor. xii. 4. said to be of God, because it is of his preparing, and where he dwells, and in the midst of which Christ, the tree of life, is; and this shews, that he is to be come at by faith, and is fruit to be eaten, and lived upon; and he is to be beheld and enjoyed by all his saints, as he is now, and will be more perfectly hereafter.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write] Of the city of Smyrna, see the note on chapter i. 11. That there was a church of Christ here is not to be doubted, though by whom it was founded is not certain; very likely by the apostle Paul, who was in those parts, and by whose means all Asia heard the Gospel of Christ, Acts xix. 10. Some think the present angel, or pastor of this church, was Polycarp, the disciple of John. Irenæus (*f*), who knew him, says he was appointed bishop of Smyrna by the apostles. Here he suffered martyrdom, and was buried: the large amphitheatre, in which he was put to death, is still to be seen, and his sepulchre is yet preserved in this place (*g*): a very famous epistle, sent by this church at Smyrna to the churches at Pontus, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and others, is extant in Eusebius (*h*). According to the Apostolical Constitutions (*i*), the first bishops of Smyrna were Aristo Strataeus and Aristo the second, and Apelles, of whom mention is made in Rom. xvi. 10. and who is reckoned among the seventy disciples; see the note on Luke x. 1. and is said to be bishop of Smyrna before Polycarp; who succeeded Polycarp, I do not find; but it is said there was a church at Smyrna in the third century; and so in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth, and bishops of it (*k*). The

Turks have in this place now thirteen mosques, the Jews two synagogues, and of the christians there are two churches, one belonging to the Greeks, and one to the Armenians (*l*). This church, and its pastor, represent the state of the church under the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Smyrna signifies myrrhe, which being bitter of taste, is expressive of the bitter afflictions, and persecutions, and deaths, the people of God in this interval endured; and yet as myrrhe is of a sweet smell, so were those saints in their sufferings for Christ, exceeding grateful and well-pleasing to him; wherefore nothing is said by way of complaint to this church; not that she was without fault, but it was proper to use her tenderly in her afflicted state: and, as Dr More observes, as myrrhe was used in the embalming of dead bodies, it may point to the many deaths and martyrdoms of the saints in this period, whereby their names and memories are perpetuated and eternized.

These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive] Of these characters of Christ, see the notes on chap. i. 8, 11, 17, 18. and they are very appositely mentioned, to encourage the saints under their sufferings of death; since Christ, who is the eternal God, had in human nature tasted of the bitterness of death for them, and was risen again; suggesting, that though they were called to undergo the bitterest deaths for his sake, they should be raised again as he was, and live with him for ever. The Ethiopic version reads, "thus saith the holy Spirit;" but it cannot be said of him that he *was dead*.

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

I know thy works] Good works, as before in y. 2.

And tribulation] This is Christ's legacy to his people, and which lies in their way to heaven; and never was the way of any to heaven more strewed with it than was the way of the saints in this period. But Christ took notice of it, and of them in it; he knew their souls in adversity, and remarked their patience under it, and their constancy, and close adherence to him.

And poverty] Which was true in a literal sense, through the spoiling of their goods, to which they

(*f*) Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 3. (*g*) Vid. Smith. Notitia septuag. Eccles. Asiae, p. 164, 165. (*h*) Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 25. (*i*) Lib. 7. c. 46. (*k*) Hist. Eccles. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 595, 596. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

(*l*) Smith. Notitia, p. 167.

they were exposed for the profession of Christ: nothing is more contemptible among men than poverty, yet Christ takes notice of it, and owns his people in it; for this poverty came not by sin, but by sufferings for his sake.

(But thou art rich)] They were rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, though poor in this world; they were rich with the riches of Christ, with the blessings of the covenant, with the graces of the Spirit, and in good works; they were kings and priests unto God, had a kingdom of grace here, and a right to the kingdom of glory hereafter; and were heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not] Who asserted themselves to be the true Israel of God, Jews that were so inwardly, regenerate persons, or truly christians; for the christians, baptized persons (*m*), were by the heathens called Jews; but these were not, they professed christianity in words, but in works denied it; they were men of bad principles and practices, and both blasphemed the ways and doctrines of Christ themselves, and caused them to be blasphemed by others also; they were false christians, nominal professors, and shunned persecution for the Gospel; who were not what they would be thought to be: these were the broachers of heresies in this period of time, in which there was a multitude of them, and which chiefly respected the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ; and they were introducers of Pagan and Jewish rites into the church, and were men of flagitious lives and conversations, and paved the way for the man of sin.

But are the synagogue of Satan] Were the children of the devil, imitated him, and were influenced by him, and were the fore-runners of antichrist, whose coming was after the working of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer] God's people undergo sufferings of various sorts, as the christians of those times did, scourgings, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself in various shapes; and these are certain, they shall suffer them; they are all known before

hand to Christ, and he sometimes gives his people previous notice of them, nor should they indulge a slavish fear about them. It is reported of Polycarp, bishop of this church at Smyrna, in a letter written by the church itself (*n*), that three days before he suffered, he dreamed his pillow, on which he laid his head, was on fire; upon which awaking, he said to those that were by him, that he should be burnt for Christ; and when he came to suffer, as he was led along, a voice was heard by the by-standers, Polycarp, be strong, and play the man.

Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison] Which has been the lot of many of the saints, and was of some, even of the faithful ministers of the word in this interval; in which Satan had an hand, instigating their enemies to prevent and stop the progress of the Gospel, and deter others both from preaching and professing it: the end was in the permission of it.

That ye may be tried] That their graces might be tried, their faith, love, zeal, courage, faithfulness, and constancy. Suffering times are trying times, whether men are real christians or no; whether they have the true grace of God or not; and whether the principles they hold are right and true, and are worth, and will bear suffering for.

And ye shall have tribulation ten days] Meaning it may be the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors; the first was under Nero, in the year 64 or 66; the second was under Domitian, about the year 93; the third was under Trajan, in the year 104; the fourth was under Hadrian, in the year 125; the fifth was under Marcus Antoninus, in the year 151; the sixth was under Septimius Severus, in the year 197; the seventh was under Maximinus, in the years 235, 236, 237; the eighth was under Decius, in the year 250; the ninth was under Valerianus, in the year 257; and the tenth was under Dioclesian, in the year 303. Austin (*o*) reckons the ten persecutions thus: the first by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximus, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerianus, the ninth by Aurelianus, the tenth by Dioclesian and Maximianus. Others, inasmuch as Nero's persecution was before this vision, reckon the ten persecutions thus: Domitian, Trajan, M. Antoninus, Verus and Lucius, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerianus, Aurelianus, Dioclesianus, Licinius: the Dioclesian persecution, lasted ten years almost throughout; and some think, that this

(*m*) Vid. Arrian. Epictet. l. 2. c. 9.

(*n*) Apud. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

(*o*) Dr Civitate

Dei, l. 13. c. 33.

this last persecution, which held ten years, is here particularly meant, and not without some good reason; since it is usual in prophetic writings, and in this book of the *Revelation*, to put days for years; so that these ten days may be the ten years, the last persecution held, and at which time the period of this church-state ended, and that of Pergamos took place.

Be thou faithful unto death] Which is an address to the ministers in this interval, to be faithful in preaching the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ; in a constant administration of the ordinances, as they were delivered; in watching over the souls of men under their care, reproving, exhorting, &c. with all long-suffering; continuing in the discharge of duty, though in continual danger of death, and though it issued in it. And also to the churches, and the members of them, to continue believing in Christ, professing his name, striving for his Gospel, attending on his ordinances, and following him whithersoever he went; though this should expose them to sufferings, even unto death, which it became them cheerfully to undergo: and to which they are encouraged by what follows,

And I will give thee a crown of life] Which may refer not only to eternal life, which is so called, *James* i. 12. because of the glory of that state, and its everlasting continuance, and is in the possession and gift of Christ; but to the deliverance of the christians from persecution, by Constantine; who coming to the imperial crown, that became not only a crown of glory to him, but of life to the church, and was as life from the dead unto the saints: to dead men is promised a crown of life, in allusion to the Gentiles, who crowned their dead (p).

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches] See the note on *y. 7.*

He that overcometh] And is not intimidated by poverty, confiscation of goods, tribulation, persecution, and death itself, but through Christ is a conqueror, and more than a conqueror over all these things,

Shall not be hurt of the second death] By which is meant eternal death, in distinction from a corporal and temporal one; and lies in a destruction of both body and soul in hell, and in an everlasting separation from God, and a continual sense

of divine wrath; but of this the saints shall never be hurt, they are ordained to eternal life; this is secured for them in Christ, and he has it in his hands for them, and will give it to them. The phrase is Jewish, and is opposed to the first death, or the death of the body; which is the effect of sin, and is appointed of God, and which the people of God die as well as others; but the second death is peculiar to wicked men.—So the Jerusalem Targum on *Deut.* xxxiii. 6. paraphrases those words, *let Reuben live, and not die*, thus; “let Reuben live in this world, and not die, *וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִוְתוֹ*,” “by the second death,” with which “the wicked die in the world to come.” Of which sense of the text and phrase Epiphanius makes mention (q). See the same phrase in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on *Isaiah* xxii. 14. and chap. lxxv. 6, 15. and in *Jer.* li. 39, 57. and in Philo the Jew (r).

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write] Of the city of Pergamos, see the note on chap. i. 11. In it was a church of Christ, but when it begun, and how long it lasted, is not certain. Antipas, who is mentioned, *y. 13.* is thought, by some, to have been the pastor of it. Though according to the Apostolical Constitutions (s), Caius was the first bishop of it; and it appears, that in the second century there were several in this place that suffered martyrdom for Christ, as Carpus, Papulus, and a woman whose name was Agathonice (t). Attalus, the martyr, who suffered in the same century, was also a native of this place (u). In the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, there was a church, and a bishop of it (w); and the christian name now is not wholly, though almost, extinct; for when our countryman, Dr Smith (x), was there, there was a little church called St Theodore's, whither a priest was frequently sent from Smyrna, to perform divine service, there being but a very few christian families in it. This church represents the church from the time of Constantine, and onward, rising up to, and enjoying great power, riches, and honour. Pergamos signifies high and lofty; things that were sublime and lofty, were,

by

(q) Contr. Hæref. Hæref. 9. (r) De Præsentis de Pœnia, p. 921. (s) Lib. 7. c. 46. (t) Euseb. Eccl.

Hist. l. 4. c. 15. (u) Ibid. l. 5. c. 1. (w) Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4.

cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. (x) Notitia, p. 120.

(p) Vid Minut. Felix, p. 42.

by the Greeks, called, *τὰ ὤρηματα*, and also all high and lofty towers (y). It was built under a very high and steep mountain, upon the top of which a tower was erected, by the lords of the lesser Asia, which still continues (z). The church it represents had its principal seat at Rome, where Satan dwelt, *ψ. 13.* which signifies exalted likewise; and it introduces the man of sin, antichrist, the popes of Rome, who exalted themselves above all that is called God, princes, kings, and emperors; whom they excommunicated, dethroned, trod upon their necks, kicked off their crowns, and obliged them to hold their stirrups whilst they mounted their horses, with other haughty actions too many to name.

These things saith he which bath the sharp sword with two edges] Of which see the note on chap. i. 16. This title is used partly to show, that the only weapon this church and the true ministers and members of it had, to defend themselves against the growing corruptions of antichrist, who in this interval rose up by degrees, and was revealed, and came to the height of his power, was the word of God, the scriptures of truth; and partly to show, that in process of time, though not in this period, the man of sin should be destroyed, with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; of which his fighting against the Nicolaitans, with the sword of his mouth, *ψ. 16.* is an emblem.

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

I know thy works] Both good and bad, and which in that pure part of this church, which opposed the growing corruptions of antichrist, were for the most part good.

And where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is] Pergamus was a city very much given to idolatry, here Satan reigned while it was pagan, and so was a fit emblem of the idolatrous church of Rome. Pausanias says (a), the country the Pergamenes inhabited was sacred to the Cabiri, the chief gods of the heathens. And the same writer (b) observes, that Æsculapius particularly was worshipped at Pergamus; and hence he is called by Martial (c), the Pergamean god; to his temple here, men used to go from different parts

of the world for cure of diseases; hither Antoninus the emperor went for such a purpose, as Herodian (d) relates; and this being a common thing, hence Lucian (e) scoffingly says, that Æsculapius had an apothecary's shop at Pergamus. As Rome, and its dominions, were the principal seat of the church in this period of time, it may well be called Satan's seat or throne; not only because it had been the seat of the Roman emperors, the ten horned, and seven headed beast, chap. xiii. 2. but because it was the seat of antichrist, which the great dragon Satan gave him, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and he was influenced by him; and who, like Satan, exalted himself above all that is called God; yea, placed himself in the temple of God, the church, as God, shewing himself to be God, assuming that power to himself which only belonged to God. Moreover, he may be called so for his enmity and malice against the saints, and for his art and subtlety, and insidious methods to ensnare and destroy them. Now to dwell where such an one has his seat, his throne, has a kingdom, power and authority, must be very uncomfortable, as well as dangerous; and required great care, circumspection, and prudence how to behave: and yet to the commendation of this church it is said,

And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith] The pure members of this church are the two witnesses, which rose up at the beginning of the apostasy of Rome, and bore their testimony against it, and for the truth; and continued to do so amidst all the corruptions and persecutions of that state: these are the two olive trees, that through the golden pipes of the word and ordinances, emptied the golden oil of Gospel-truths out of themselves, pure and incorrupt, and the two candlesticks that held forth the light of the Gospel in the darkest times of Popery; these held fast the name of Christ, or the Gospel, and denied not, but confessed the doctrine of faith in the worst of times. They had the truths of the Gospel in their possession, which were dear and valuable to them; and whereas there was a danger of losing them, they held them fast, with great courage, magnanimity, and strength, though the greater number was against them, and they were attended with reproach and persecution.

Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth] Antipas is the proper name of a man; so a son of Herod was called (f), even he that beheaded

(y) Servius in Virgil. *Æneid.* l. 1. p. 403. & l. 2. p. 633. Ed. Basil. 1586. (z) Smith. *Notitia*, p. 112.

(a) L. 1. five Attica, p. 8. (b) L. 3. five Laconica, p. 215. (c) Lib. 9. *Epig.* 14.

(d) Hist. l. 4. c. 14. (e) In *Icaro Menippo*. (f) *Ioseph. Antiq.* l. 17. c. 1. §. 3. De *Bello Jud.* l. 1. c. 23. §. 4.

beheaded John, and mocked Christ: and there might be a man of this name at Pergamus, that might suffer martyrdom for the Gospel of Christ; and who was an emblem of the confessors, witnesses, and martyrs, that suffered for Christ, in this period of time, through their opposition to the popes of Rome; for Antipas is the contraction of Antipater, and is the same with Antipapas, or Antipappas, which signifies one that is against the pope, an opposer of that holy father; and so intends all those that made head against him, upon his rising and revelation, and when he assumed the power he did to himself; such as the Waldenses and Albigenes particularly, who set themselves against him, openly declared that the pope was antichrist, and that his government was tyrannical, and his doctrines the doctrines of devils, abominable and fabulous. They bore a faithful testimony against all his corruptions and innovations, and became martyrs in the cause of Christ, many thousands of them being slain for his sake within the dominions of this first-born of Satan. The Alexandrian copy reads *Anteipas*; and his name is left out in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

But I have a few things against thee] The members of this church before their open separation from the apostacy; who still continued in the communion of the corrupt church of Rome, tho' they remonstrated against the errors and evil practices that crept in; and so were a stumbling-block, and a snare to others to join in their idolatry and superstition.

Because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication] Which latter was in order to the former: the instruction Balaam gave to Balac, which is here called his doctrine, was, that Balac should get some of the most beautiful women in his kingdom, to ply the men of Israel, and draw them into uncleanness, and so to idolatry; by which means, God being angry with them, he might get an advantage over them: that the Israelites did commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and eat things sacrificed to idols, and bowed down to Baal Peor, is certain, *Numb. xxv. 1—3.* but that this was brought

about through the counsel of Balaam, is not so plainly expressed, though it is hinted at in *Numb. xxxi. 15, 16.* but the Jewish writers are very express about this matter. Jonathan ben Uzziel, one of their Targumists on *Numb. xxiv. 14.* has these words of Balaam; "Come, and I will counsel thee, (speaking to Balac) go and set up inns, and place in them whorish women, to sell food and drink at a low price; and this people will come and eat and drink, and be drunken, and will lie with them, and deny their God; and they will be quickly delivered into thine hands, and many of them shall fall."

This now was the stumbling-block he taught Balac to lay before them. And elsewhere (*g*) it is said, "that Balaam, the wicked, gave counsel to Balac, the son of Zippor, to cause the Israelites to fall by the sword; he said to him, the God of this people hates whoredom, cause thy daughters to commit whoredom with them, and ye shall rule over them." And then they go on to relate how they built shops, and placed an old woman without, and a young woman within; and when the Israelites came to buy, how well they used them, and what familiarity they admitted them to; how they made them drink of Ammonitish wine, which inclined to lust; and when they signified their desire, obliged them to worship Baal Peor, and renounce the law of Moses. Both Philo (*b*) and Josephus (*i*) speak of this counsel of Balaam, much to the same purpose. The Samaritan chronicle says (*k*), that this counsel pleased the king, and he sent into the camp of Israel, on a sabbath-day, twenty-four thousand young women, by whom the Israelites were so seduced, that they did every thing they desired them, which was just the number of those that were slain, *Numb. xxv. 9.* By Balaam may be meant the pope of Rome, for that name signifies, "the lord of the people;" and is very apposite to him, who in this interval took upon him to be universal bishop, and lorded it over both church and state, in a most haughty and tyrannical manner; and the Balaamites were those who submitted to his power and authority, and received his doctrines; and by Balac, king of Moab, may be intended the secular powers, the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, who were instructed by the popes of Rome, to draw their subjects into idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, to eat the bread of God, to worship the host, images,

(*g*) T. Hierof. Sanhedrim, fol. 28. 4. & Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 106. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 20. fol. 229. 1. Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 244. 3, 4. & par. 2. fol. 76. 4. (*b*) De Vita Moisi, l. 1. p. 647, 648. (*i*) Antiq. l. 4. c. 6. §. 6—3. (*k*) Apud Hottinger, Exercit Antimorin, p. 109.

images, and saints departed; and which proved a snare, and a stumbling to some of this church, as to the Israelites of old, to do the same things.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans] These impure heretics sprung up in the time of the apostolic church, but their doctrines were not received, and their deeds were hated; see y. 6. This seems to design the doctrines of the church of Rome, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the priests, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others also; which were the source of all uncleanness and abominable lusts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in process of time, brothel-houses were set up, and licensed and encouraged by authority.

Which thing I hate] The doctrine of these men, as well as their deeds.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Repent] This is said to those who were truly godly in those times, but still retained their communion with these corrupt men, and had not, as yet, separated from them; nor had they protested against these evil doctrines and practices, at least but very coldly, and had too much connived at them; and therefore are called upon to repent of their lukewarmness, negligence, and sinful compliances.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly] In a providential way, to rebuke and chastise for such remissness, indifference, and evil communication.

And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth] Of this sword see the note on chap. i. 16. And it is observable, that Christ does not say, *I will fight against thee*, the true members of his mystical body, though lax and supine, for Christ does not fight against his people, but for them; but he says, *and will fight against them*, the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, for their idolatry and uncleanness.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches] See the note on y. 7.

To him that overcometh] The Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and does not give in to the doctrines and practices of the one, or of the other, whatever persecution and trouble he meets with and endures on that account;

Will I give to eat of the hidden manna] In opposition to eating things sacrificed to idols, refused by him. The allusion is to the manna which the Israelites eat of in the wilderness, which may be called *hidden*; either because they knew not what it was, when they first saw it; or because it was laid up in a golden pot, and put in the most holy place, where it was secret, and none but the high priest could see it, and who entered there but once a year: or rather, because it was at first hidden under the dew: for according to the account the Jews give of it, a dew first fell upon the ground, then the manna upon that, and then another dew upon the manna; so that there was a dew under it, and a dew over it; insomuch that it was as if it was laid up, they say, in a box or chest (*l*); and they supposed the manna had respect to things future (*m*), and do expect it in the times of the Messiah. They say (*n*), as the first, so the last redeemer will cause manna to descend from heaven; and the clouds are, by them, reckoned the mills which will grind manna for the righteous in the world to come (*o*): yea, they speak (*p*) of, מַנְּחֵם נִסְתָּר, "hidden manna," as the food of the righteous, the very phrase here used. Now this being the food of the children of Israel in the wilderness, is very fitly mentioned here; since the church, in this period of time, in which antichrist arose, was obliged to flee into the wilderness, and there abide during his reign, and where she is nourished with this hidden manna; by which may be meant the Gospel, which is soul-quickenings, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying food, by which the saints are nourished up unto everlasting life, and which is hid to the world, which the men of it know nothing of; and especially Jesus Christ, the sum and substance of it, may be meant, and that secret spiritual consolation enjoyed in communion with him, and by eating him, or feeding by faith upon him; in what respects Christ may be compared to manna, see the note on *John vi. 32*. And he may be said to be *hidden*, because he is unknown to

(*l*) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. 2. Jarchi in Exod. xvi. 13. 14. Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 30. (*m*) Tzeret Hammor,

fol. 38. 4. (*n*) Midrash Shirhashirim, fol. 11. 2. Midrash

Ruth, fol. 33. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, f. l. 63. 2. Pesieta in

Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 75. 4. (*o*) Raya Mehimna

in Zohar in Num. fol. 96. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 68. 4.

(*p*) Zohar in Num. fol. 88. 1.

to men, until revealed; and is wholly hidden from carnal and unregenerate men, and is enjoyed only by believers; and it may denote the private way, in which the true church of Christ had communion with him in his word and ordinances in the wilderness, and during the dark times of Popery. Philo the Jew (*q*) often interprets the manna by the Logos, the Word of God, the most ancient Word of God.

And will give him a white stone] The phrase, "to add a white stone," with the Latins, is used to give one's approbation of any thing; and could it be applied here, might signify the approbation Christ gives of his church and people here, amidst the testimonies they bear, and the persecutions they endure for his name's sake, and that which he will give of them before his Father, angels, and men, at the last day: white stones were used on various accounts. The Grecians used them to mark good or lucky days with them, as they called them; and could the allusion be thought to be to this custom, the sense would be, that Christ promises to his people that overcome, happy days after the times of Popish darkness and persecution were over: white stones were also given to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won; and here applied, may respect the crown of life and glory given to them who are more than conquerors through Christ, with their right and title to it, and the excellency of it. The Romans in judgement used to give their suffrages for condemnation by casting black stones into the urn, and for absolution white stones; to which Ovid has respect, when he says (*r*),

*Mos erat antiquis, niveis atrisque lapillis,
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa.*

And this is thought by many to be referred to here, and may denote, that though the pure members of Christ, and who abhorred and protested against the abominations of the church of Rome, were charged with heresy and schism, and what not, yet Christ would absolve them, and justify them from all those charges. But rather the allusion is to a custom among the Jews, who used to examine the priests and levites before they went to their service, or to the Sanhedrim, to judge and pass sentence, whether their ways and works were right; and if they were as they should be, they gave them, חומר דמקרא "the

stone of the sanctuary;" if not, they might not enter on business, as it is said; and of Levi he said, *thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy holy one*, Deut. xxxiii. 8 (*s*). Now on the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the stones in the high priest's breast-plate, were engraven the names of the children of Israel; and, as the Jews say, the name *Jehovah*, to which reference may be had in the following clause; and may denote that the church, though in the wilderness, is regarded by Christ, is bore upon his heart, and cared for by him; and also its spotless purity in him, and justification by him.

And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it] By this name may be meant, either the name of *Jehovah* our righteousness, which is the name both of Christ, and of his church, Jer. xxiii. 6. and chap. xxxiii. 16. or the name of a child of God, sometimes called a new name; see *Isaiah* lvi. 5. and chap. lxii. 2. and so designs the blessing of adoption: this may be said to be a new name, because renewed, manifested to, and put upon the people of God, when they are made new creatures, tho' provided in predestination, and in the covenant of grace from eternity; and because a renowned and excellent one, better than that of the sons and daughters of the greatest prince on earth; and because a wonderful one, being an instance of amazing love and grace; and is what *no man knoweth*, but the receiver of it: the Father of these adopted ones is unknown to natural men; and so is Christ, through whom this blessing is bestowed; and the Spirit of God also, who witnesses to it; and the persons that enjoy it, and the blessing itself, and the inheritance to which they are adopted: and this new name being on the white stone, may shew that the blessings of justification and adoption, though they are two distinct ones, yet they are inseparable; they go together, and both give a right to the heavenly inheritance; and they are also, as well as the hidden manna, gifts of free grace, and not owing to the works and merit of men, and are given by Christ, and in and through him. At Rome, some white stones have been dug up, some lesser, some greater, with names and letters, and other engravings upon them, which Pignorius (*t*) has given the figures of; and to such some have thought the allusion here is, and may serve to illustrate this passage. The Ethiopic version, instead of a "white stone," reads, a "famous book."

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira

(*q*) Alleg. l. 2. p. 93. Quod det, potior, p. 276. Quis rer. divin. Hæres. p. 491, 492. & Leg. Alleg. 3. p. 1103.

(*r*) Metamorphos. l. 15. fol. 1.

(*s*) Zohar in Lev. fol. 8. 1.

(*t*) De Servis, p. 342.

Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write] Of the city of Thyatira, see the note on chapter i. 11. a church was formed here very likely by the apostle Paul; Lydia was a native of this place, who, and her household, were converted and baptized by him at Philippi, *Acts* xvi. 14. though Epiphanius (*u*) seems to grant, what some heretics objected to the authority of this book, that there was no church at Thyatira when this letter was written; however it is certain, there was one in the second century, as the same writer observes, since, as he relates, it was over-run with the Cataphrygian heresy; and in the fourth century there was a bishop from Thyatira in the council of Nice; and even in the eighth century there was one Esaias a presbyter, who supplied the place of the bishop of Thyatira in another council at Nice (*w*): the Turks have now eight mosques in it, but there is not one christian church or place of worship to be found in it (*x*). Who was the angel, or pastor of this church at the writing of this epistle, is not certain; however, it is designed for all the ministers and churches in the interval this church represents; and this period takes in the darkest and most superstitious times of popery, until the reformation. Thyatira is the same as Thygatira, which signifies a daughter; and it had its name, as Stephanus Byzantius says (*y*), from hence: Seleucus the son of Nicanor, being at war with Lyfimachus, and hearing that he had a daughter born, called this city Thygatira, which was before called Pelopia, and Semiramis; which is a very fit name for this church, and expresses the effeminacy of it, when the virgin Mary, whom the Romanists call the daughter of God, was more worshipped than her Son; and was not only made a partner with him in the business of salvation, but even set above him; where there were such swarms of monks and friars, and religious orders of several sorts, as Franciscans and Dominicans, who claimed her as their patroness; when such numbers of them clad themselves in cowls and long garments, that they looked more like women in hoods and petticoats, than really men; hence also the corrupt part of this church is signified by the woman Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal the

Zidonian; and it should not be forgot that there was once a she pope, a woman that sat in the papal chair, a whore in a literal sense; wherefore antichrist, or the popes of Rome, are fitly called the great whore, the mother of harlots. Mr Daubuz observes, that the first christian of Thyatira was a woman, and that the false prophets which first enticed the christians to apostacy in this church, were women, as Maximilla, Quintilla, and Priscilla; to which I would add, that according to Epiphanius, that among those heretics, and which swallowed up this church, their bishops were women, and so were their presbyters, or elders; and Dr Smith (*z*) is of opinion that the inhabitants of this place, when heathen, were worshippers of the goddess Diana; so that upon all accounts, the church here was a fit symbol of the effeminate church of Rome.

These things saith the Son of God] He who is truly, properly, naturally, and essentially the Son of God: this character Christ makes use of to assert his proper deity, as being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with his Father, as well as to command the greater regard to what he ordered to be written to the churches; and chiefly in opposition to the effeminate state of this church: it was time for him to take to him his highest name, as expressive of his highest nature, and to assert himself the Son of God, when Mary his mother according to the flesh, and who was but a mere creature, was called the daughter of God, and set upon a level with him, and even preferred unto him.

Who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire] Quick and sharp, and penetrating through the darkness of this state; seeing into, discovering and exposing the horrid actions and wickednesses of men done in the dark; expressing fury, wrath, and vengeance against the Romish antichrist and his followers; and may also design the light of Gospel doctrine, which broke out in those times at certain seasons, to the dispelling of Popish darkness in some measure; see the note on chapter i. 14.

And his feet are like fine brass] In the description of Christ in chapter i. 14. it is added, *as if they burned in a furnace*; see the note there; and may denote the strength, stability, and support Christ gave his people while suffering for his sake, when in the furnace, and burning for him, which kind of death was much used in those times: hence Dr More, to whom I am much obliged for many hints in this exposition of the epistles.

(*u*) Contra Hæres. l. 2. Hæres. 51. (*w*) Eccl. Hist.

Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

(*x*) Smith Notitia, p. 130. (*y*) De Urbibus.

(*z*) Notitia, p. 126.

epistles to the churches, thinks that Thyatira is an allusion to *Sulmeia*, which signify altars for the burning of sweet odours; and so may be expressive of the burning of the saints, those sweet odours, as they are to God and Christ, with fire and faggot; which was now practised, as in the other period, killing with the sword was chiefly used; in the midst of which Christ was present, supporting his people.

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

I know thy works] Good works, as appears from the particular enumeration of them afterwards, and the commendation of proficiency in them, the last being more than the first, and the distinction from the evil ones in the next verse; this is said to the faithful followers and professors of Christ in this interval.

And charity] By which is meant not a relieving the wants of the poor; much less such a charity as connives at the errors and heresies of men; but the divine grace of love to God and Christ, and the saints, without which, a profession of religion is a vain thing; and generally speaking, this grace is most in exercise in a time of trouble and persecution.

And service] Or *ministry*, meaning either the ministry of the word, which was exercised by many with great zeal, diligence, and faithfulness, as by Wickliff, John Hufs, Jerom of Prague, and others; or the ministering to the necessities of the poor saints, as an evidence of their charity or love; or else the service of God is here intended, which is but reasonable, and is his due, and ought to be performed to him only, and that with fear and fervency, in faith, and with a pure conscience, with humility, and without mercenary views, and in righteousness and true holiness; or the service of love which the saints perform to one another, as praying for one another, bearing one another's burdens, admonishing and reproving for sin, restoring such as are gone astray, comforting the distressed, building up one another in their most holy faith, and exhorting and stirring up each other to the duties of religion.

And faith] Not the doctrine of faith, as preached by the ministers of the word, and held and maintained by the true professors of it; but either the grace of faith, or the profession of both; or rather the faithfulness, both of the ministers and private believers of those times, as the Wal-

denes and Albigenes, the Lollards and Wickliffites, who abode by, and were faithful to the light which they had received.

And thy patience] In suffering for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and very much it was they did endure, and yet held out to the end.

And thy works; and the last to be more than the first] That is, that their works or acts of love to God and Christ and one another, and of service to God and to the saints, and of faith and faithfulness in the cause of God, and of patience in suffering for the Gospel of Christ, were more in quantity, and greater in quality, toward the close of this period, which brought on the Reformation, than at the beginning of it; and which were done by the persons before-mentioned, and by others.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee] By way of complaint; so the Arabic version renders it, "I have a certain complaint against thee." The impartiality of Christ may be observed in taking notice of the bad deeds, as well as of the good ones of his people, and his tenderness in representing them as few; and these things he had against them not in a judicial way, to their condemnation, but in a providential way, in order to chastise them for them, for their good; and they are as follow.

Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel] Or "thy wife Jezebel," as the Complutensian edition and Syriac version read; the name of king Ahab's wife, who seduced him, in the Hebrew language is *Izebel*, but is read by the Septuagint in 1 Kings xvi. 31. *Jezebel*, as here; and by Josephus (a) *Jezebela*; she had her name from זב, *Zebel*, dung, to which Elijah has reference in 2 Kings ix. 37. the Ethiopic version calls her "Elzabel." By her is meant the apostate church of Rome, comparable to Jezebel, the wife of Ahab; as she was the daughter of an heathen, so is Rome papal the daughter of Rome pagan; and as she was the wife of Ahab, and therefore a queen, so the whore of Babylon calls herself; and as Jezebel was famous for her paintings, so the church of Rome for her pretensions to religion

(a) Antiq. l. 8. c. 13. §. 1, 4, 7.

and holiness, and for the gaudiness of her worship; and as she was remarkable for her idolatry, whoredoms, witchcrafts, and cruel persecution of the prophets of the Lord, and for murder, and innocent blood she shed; so the church of Rome, for her idolatrous worship of images, for her whoredoms, both in a literal and spiritual sense, and for the witchcrafts, magic, and devilish arts, many of her popes have been addicted to, and especially for her barbarities and cruelties exercised upon the true professors of Christ, and for the blood of the martyrs, with which she has been drunk; and as Jezebel stirred up Ahab against good and faithful men, so has this church stirred up the secular powers, emperors, kings, and princes, against the true followers of Christ: and the end of both of them is much alike; as scarce any thing was left of Jezebel, so Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, shall be cast into the sea, and be found no more at all: compare 2 Kings ix. 7, 22, 30, 31, 33, 37 with Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 17, 18, and chap. xviii. 3, 7, 21, 23.

Which calleth herself a prophetess. As perhaps Jezebel might do, since she was such a favourer of the prophets of Baal, and so familiarly conversed with them, and kept them even a hundred of them at her table; and certain it is, that the antitype of her pretends to an infallible interpretation of the scriptures, and to have a bulk of unwritten traditions; and which interpretations and traditions are to be regarded as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Now what is complained of in the true members and followers of Christ, is, that they suffered this woman

To teach. When it was insufferable for a woman to teach, and especially such a strumpet.

And to seduce my servants to commit fornication. To deceive such who called themselves the servants of Christ, and draw them into the commission of spiritual fornication, which is idolatry, as the idolatrous worship of the idols, and of images and saints departed.

And to eat things sacrificed unto idols. As Baalam, or the pope, before had done, &c. 14. This may have respect to the latter part of this period, when the eyes of many began to be opened to see these false doctrines and idolatrous practices, and yet had not courage enough to oppose them as they should.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication. Or idolatry. This may have respect to the time of the witnesses, the Waldenses, and others, who

bore a testimony against the Romish idolatry, and reproved for it, and denounced the judgment of God in case of impenitence; and as these things were repeated time after time, this may be called a space given to repent in, just as Jezebel had a space given her to repent in, from the time that Elijah declared the word of the Lord that the dogs should eat her: so the Jews (b) say of the old world, that God "gave them *אנכי* *מן* space to repent," but they repented not, as here.

And she repented not. See chapter ix. 20, 21. for the time for, and means leading to repentance may be given, yet if the grace of repentance itself is not given, men, either particular persons, or whole bodies of men, will never repent of their sins. The Alexandrian copy, Complutensian, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, "and she would not repent."

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed. Of sickness and languishing; and which denotes the sickly, pining, and languishing state of the church of Rome, as a just retribution for her bed of luxury and delicioussness; adultery and idolatry she has indulged herself in; this was threatened, and was yet to come, and begin at the time of the reformation, signified by the next church-state; and ever since, the whore of Rome has been visibly sickening and decaying. The Alexandrian copy reads, "into a prison."

And them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation. The kings of the earth, and their subjects, who have joined in the idolatries and corruptions of the Romish church, chapters xvii. 2, and xviii. 3, which may be understood either of that distress and uneasiness the reformation in some countries gave them; or those outward troubles, wars, and desolations they have been since attended with, particularly the empire of Germany, which has been in great tribulation, formerly by the Turks, and of late by intestine broils among themselves, and by the armies of other princes entering into it; or it may regard that eternal vengeance that will be recompensed to all such persons.

Except they repent of their deeds. Their spiritual fornication or idolatry, and all the abominations the members of that apostate church are guilty of. There seems to be an allusion in this verse to

(b) Justin. fol. 7. i.

Ahaziah and Joram, sons of Ahab and Jezebel, who followed their mother's idolatrous practices, and were cast upon a bed of sickness, 2 Kings i. 2. and chapter viii. 29.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

And I will kill her children with death] Her popes, cardinals, priests, jesuits, monks, friars, and all that join in the Romish apostacy, they shall be killed with death; there shall be an utter extirpation of them in God's own time; or they shall be killed with the second death: when used alone, or as distinct from any other kind of death, signifies the plague; compare with this 2 Kings ix. 24. and chapter x. 1, 7.

And all the churches] That shall be in being at the time of Rome's destruction.

Shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts] Or am the omniscient God; which will be known by inflicting punishment on the followers of antichrist; when their hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and exposed by him; and they shall receive the righteous reward of their evil practices, which they have coloured over, and glossed with specious pretences, of religion and holiness, and a zeal for God and his glory, when they only meant themselves, the gratifying their carnal lusts, and securing their worldly interests, and amassing riches and honours to themselves.

And I will give unto every one of you according to your works] Who have connived at, and joined with them in their evil deeds; as many as were seduced by the false prophets to commit spiritual fornication with her: as Christ is omniscient, and does not judge according to the outward appearance of things, but knows the principles and ends of all actions, however covert they may be; so he is righteous in judging and in punishing, which will be according as mens works are; and not one shall escape his righteous judgment, nor the due desert of their sins, though the punishment of some may be greater than that of others.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden,

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira] The copulative *and* is left out in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, and if retained, it may be rendered thus, "even unto the rest;" the persons spoken to are the same, the pastor of this church, with his colleagues, and all the rest of the faithful in it; which shows that this epistle, and so the rest, were not written to the pastors only, but to the churches; and that the pastor and his colleagues, with others, were free from the abominable errors and corruptions before spoken of; and that in the worst of times, God does, and will reserve a people for himself, who are described as follows:

As many as have not this doctrine] Who had not given into, and embraced this doctrine of the antichristian church of Rome, concerning infallibility, the worshipping of images, transubstantiation, &c. the Arabic version reads, "this new doctrine;" for notwithstanding the large pretensions of the Romish church to antiquity, her doctrine is but a novel doctrine.

And which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak] That is, had not approved of the doctrines of antichrist, which though his followers called deep things and mysteries of their holy religion, such as transubstantiation, &c. yet, to speak in the language of the pure and faithful professors of the Gospel, they are no other than the depths of Satan, or doctrines of devils; or else the sense is, as Jezebel and her followers say, to the contempt of the faithful, arrogating knowledge to themselves, and upbraiding them with simplicity and ignorance, as not knowing Satan's devices, nor how to rescue souls out of them, as they did; but the former sense seems best,

I will put upon you none other burden] Meaning not any affliction or tribulation than the present one; nor any other errors and heresies than what were broached; but no other precept or command than what follows; see 2 Kings ix. 25.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

But that which ye have already] Which was something good, even the faithful word, the form of sound words, the mystery and doctrine of faith; this they had received from Christ and his apostles; they had it in their hearts, and a comfortable experience of the truth and power of it, and had made a profession of it, which they now held, and are here exhorted to hold fast.

Hold fast till I come] Meaning the coming of Christ, either at the reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, which began at the close of this church-

church-state, when the hands and hearts of those professors would be more strengthened, which seems to be the first sense of the words; or to judge Jezebel, destroy antichrist, which will be by the brightness of his coming; till which time the doctrine of the Gospel is to be held fast: and such an exhortation will be always necessary, since till then, there will be always more or less an opposition to it, and attempts made to wrest it out of the hands of its professors, to cause them to hesitate about it, and to intimidate them in the profession of it, by loading them with reproaches, calumnies, and persecution.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

And he that overcometh] Jezebel and her idolatries, her children, and all that commit adultery with her; such as are not drawn into the same evil practices with them, but bravely stand their ground against the Romish antichrist and his followers, and bear their testimony against his impious doctrines and idolatrous practices.

And keepeth my works unto the end] Either of life, or of this church-state, or of time, when Christ will personally appear, even at the end of the world; and by his works are meant, not the works which were done by him, as his miracles and works of mercy to the souls and bodies of men, and works of righteousness in obedience to the law, and the work of redemption and salvation; though these are works to be observed, and kept in view, and to be preserved in memory, and for the encouragement of faith and hope; but the works which are commanded, and required by Christ to be done by his people; as the public work of the ministry, by the preachers of the Gospel; and every private work, both internal and external, as the work of faith, the labour of love, and every act of obedience, which is constantly to be discharged. The Arabic version reads, "and keepeth my words and my works;" things both relating to doctrine and practice.

To him will I give power over the nations] Or Gentiles, the Papists; so called because of the pagan notions and worship introduced by them; and because they consist of many nations, tongues, and people, who are deceived, and drawn into idolatry by them: and this power over them may be understood in a spiritual sense; through the preaching of the Gospel, which being attended with the power of God, is the means of converting sinners, and so of weakening the kingdom of Satan, and of antichrist; and which had its

fulfilment, at least in part, at the time of the reformation, and onward, and will have still a greater accomplishment in the spiritual reign of Christ and his people, under the Philadelphia church-state, and it may also design the temporal power which the saints shall have over antichrist, when they shall take away his dominion, and consume and destroy it, and the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most high; *Daniel vii. 25—27.*

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron] Either with the Gospel, which is the rod of Christ's strength, and is the power of God unto salvation, and by which the kingdom of Christ is enlarged, and the power of the church of Christ over the antichristian party is increased; or it may design great strictness and severity, with which the man of sin will be used by the saints of the most high, when they shall take away his dominion from him.

As the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers] Which may be expressive either of the breaking of rocky hearts in pieces at conversion, and of making souls humble and contrite; or of the irreparable ruin and destruction of antichrist, when the saints shall consume and destroy him.

Even as I received of my Father] Christ as God has an underived power and government; but as mediator, his rule and power over the nations are asked by him, given to him, and received by him, *Psal. ii. 8, 9.* This *as* does not intend equality, but similitude; and denotes the participation the saints will have with Christ in the judgment and destruction of antichrist, and in his kingdom and power.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

So Christ is called, chapter xxiii. 16. and here it designates an illustrious appearance of Christ at the close of this church-state, and a communication of much light and grace from him, which introduced the Sardian church-state, or the reformation by Luther, Calvin, &c. which is the phosphorus, or morning star, to the spiritual reign of Christ under the Philadelphia church-state; which will be the bright, clear day of the Gospel, when the present twilight, which is be-

tween the appearance of the morning-star and that glorious day, will be removed: for by this morning-star is not meant the glory that shall be put upon the bodies of the saints in the resurrection morn; nor the heavenly glory itself, or the hope of it; but the dawning of the latter-day glory, which began at the reformation, and is promised the faithful professors in the Thyatirian church-state, who lived in the darkness of Popery.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See the note on *ch.* 7.

CHAP. III.

This chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and begins with that to Sardis; in which the sender describes himself by some things taken out of a former description of him; and gives an account of the state of this church; that her works were known by him, which were imperfect; and that she had the name of a living church, but was dead; wherefore she is exhorted to watchfulness and diligence, to remember how she had heard and received the Gospel, and to hold it fast, and repent of her sins; if not, he threatens to come as a thief unawares upon her, *ch.* 1—3. but excepts some few persons from this general account, who were not defiled with the corruptions, of the majority, and who therefore should be favoured with communion with him, *ch.* 4. and then some gracious promises are made to persevering saints, and the epistle is concluded in the usual form, *ch.* 5, 6. Next follows the epistle to the church at Philadelphia; in which the sender assumes some peculiar titles not before mentioned, taken from his holiness, truth, and power, *ch.* 7. signifies his approbation of her works; declares he had set before her an open door, which could not be shut; affirms she had a little strength, and commends her for keeping his word, *ch.* 8. and for her encouragement, promises that some persons formerly of bad characters, should come and worship before her, and should know what an interest she had in his love; and that since she had kept his word, he would keep her from an hour of temptation, which will be a trying time to all the world, *ch.* 9, 10. and in consideration of his speedy coming, he exhorts her to hold fast what she had, that she might not lose her honour and glory; and promises the overcomer a fixed place and name in the house of God; and closes

the epistle as the rest, *ch.* 11—13. and then follows the last epistle of all, which is that to the church at Laodicea; in which the sender describes himself by some characters taken from his truth and faithfulness, and from his eternity, power, and dominion, *ch.* 14. represents the members of this church as lukewarm, and very disagreeable to him, *ch.* 15, 16. and as having a vain opinion of themselves, being ignorant of their real state and case, *ch.* 17. wherefore he gives them some wholesome counsel and advice, suitable to their condition, *ch.* 18. and whereas there were some among them he loved, he lets them know that his rebukes and chastenings were from love, and with a view to stimulate them to zeal, and bring them to repentance, which became them, *ch.* 19. and then he informs them where he was, what he expected from them, and what they might upon a suitable behaviour enjoy with him, *ch.* 20. and next promises to the overcomer great honour and glory, such as he had with his Father; and concludes the epistle in his usual manner, *ch.* 21, 22.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write [Of the city of Sardis see the note on chap. 1. 11. when, and by whom this church was founded, and who was the present angel or pastor of it, is not now to be certainly known; however, here was a church in the second century, of which Melito was then pastor; and he is thought by some to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the *Revelation*, and an apology for the christians, sent to the emperor Antoninus Verus, in whose time he lived (*c*); in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries, there was a church here and bishops of it (*d*): but now there are but very few christians to be found here, and who have not a place to worship in, nor any to minister to them (*e*). This church represents the state of the church from the time of the reformation by Luther and others, until a more glorious state of the church appears,

(*c*) Euseb. *Ecl. Hist.* 1. 4. c. 13. 26. & 1. 5. c. 24.
(*d*) Hist. *Ecl. Magdeburg.* cent. 3. c. 21. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2.
(*e*) Hist. *Ecl.* cent. 5. c. 4. p. 3. c. 7. p. 128. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4.
cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 9.
c. 3. p. 3. (*e*) Smith, *Notitia*, p. 138.

appears, or until the spiritual reign of Christ in the Philadelphian period; under the Sardinian church-state we now are: that this church is an emblem of the reformed churches from Popery, is evident, not only from its following the Thyatirian state, which expresses the darkness of Popery, and the depths of Satan in it; but from its being clear of Balaam, and those that held his doctrine; and from the Nicolaitans and their tenets, and from Jezebel, and those that committed adultery with her; things which the two former churches are charged with; but from these the present church reformed. This city of Sardis was once a very flourishing and opulent city; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the royal seat of the rich king Croesus, though now a very poor and mean village; and may denote the magnificence and splendor of this church-state, at least in name and figure, it has appeared in, in the world; though now in a very low and mean condition, and may be worse before the spiritual reign of Christ begins in the next period: there may be some allusion in the name of this church to the precious stone Sarda, which Pliny says (*f*), was found about Sardis, and had its name from hence; the same with the Sardinian stone in *Rev.* iv. 2. and chap. xxi. 20. This stone naturalists say (*g*), drives away fear, gives boldness, cheerfulness, and sharpness of wit, and frees from witchcrafts and forceries; which may be expressive of the boldness and courage of the first reformers; of the cheerfulness, joy, and pleasure, which appeared in their countenances, and which they spread in others by preaching the doctrines of the Gospel; and of those excellent gifts and talents both of nature, learning, and grace, by which they were fitted for their service; and of their being a means of delivering men from the witchcrafts of Jezebel, and the forceries of the whore of Rome: and perhaps some allusion may be in this name, as is thought by Cocceius, to the Hebrew word שריר, *sharid*, which signifies a remnant, since in this church-state there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few names, whose garments were undefiled; or to the word שרר, *shered*, which signifies a carpenter's rule or line; since the first reformers were endeavouring to bring every doctrine and practice to the rule and line of God's word.

These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God] The fulness and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as in chapter i. 4. which Christ as mediator has without measure,

and are at his dispose; and which he having received for men, gives unto them; and at the time of the reformation bestowed them on many eminent servants of his, in a very plentiful manner; for which reason he assumes this character in writing to this church.

And the seven stars] The ministers of the Gospel; see the notes on chapters ii. 16. and ii. 1. these were filled by Christ at this time with evangelical light and knowledge; and were sent, and held forth by him as lights in the world; and were instruments in his hand for great good; and were wonderfully held, kept, and preserved by him, notwithstanding the greatness of their work, their weakness in themselves, and the power, rage, and fury of the antichristian party; Luther is a remarkable instance of this: Christ's making use of the same title here as in the epistle to the church at Ephesus, which represents the apostolic church, may show that this church-state bore some degree of likeness to that, and that it was a sort of renewing of it.

I know thy works] Good works chiefly; the nature and imperfection of them; and also bad works.

That thou hast a name that thou livest] The reformed churches have had a name for spiritual living, by faith on Christ's righteousness only for justification, that article being the great article of the reformation: there was in them an appearance of liveliness, by their zeal for Gospel-doctrine and worship, and a form of living according to godliness; they were esteemed, were celebrated, and famous for these things, especially for living by faith on Christ's righteousness.

And art dead] Or but art dead; for, the most part, or greater part of the members of these churches, are dead in trespasses and sins; and as for the rest, they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duties; and under great spiritual declensions and decays, just as it were ready to die; and but few really alive in a spiritual sense, and especially lively, or in the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty; yea, dead as to those things in which they had a name to live; and this seems to be our case now, who it is to be hoped are at, or towards the close of this period.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Be watchful] Which may respect both ministers and members: the ministers of the Gospel, whose business

(*f*) Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7. Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.

(*g*) Ruzus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 6. Albert. Magn. de Rebus Metall. l. 2. c. 17. Schroder. Pharmacopoeia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 13.

business is to watch over themselves, their conversation and doctrine, and watch every opportunity to preach it, and the success of their ministry; and that they do not grow careless, or be drawn aside through frowns or flatteries; and over others, as shepherds do, to know the state of their flock; as watchmen of cities to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger; and to see that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution: and this may also respect the members of these churches, who ought to be watchful, and constant attenders on the word and ordinances, and in the duty of prayer; and should watch over themselves, their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions, and against sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers: or *be awake*; which shows that both ministers and churches are asleep, or much inclined to it; which is the present case of both in this period of time.

And strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die] Not good works; though these may be said to be ready to die when men grow weary of them, are lifeless in the performance of them, and want zeal for them; and may be said to be strengthened when men do their first works: nor the graces of the Spirit; for the whole work of grace remains, and though it is imperfect, yet no part is, or can be taken away from it; yea, there is an increase of it, though it may not be discerned; the work of grace cannot die, or be ready to die; there may be a decline as to the exercise of it, and a want of liveliness in it; and things may be ready to die in appearance, and in the apprehension of believers, but not in reality; and besides it is God's work, and not man's, to strengthen this: therefore they may intend the truths of the Gospel, which at the beginning of the reformation were revived, and were preached with great life and liveliness; but towards the close of this state, as now, would be just ready to expire, to be almost lost, and dead, and buried, as they are; and which it becomes both ministers and members of churches to hold, and hold up, establish, and confirm: or else the rest of the members of this church may be meant, those of them that remained, that were not wholly sunk and apostatized; and yet were in a very faint and sickly state, scarce any life in them, ready to give up their religion and profession; which should be strengthened, by preaching the pure Gospel, by faithfully administering the ordinances of it, and by speaking comfortable and encouraging words to them. The Complutensian edition, and some copies read, "which thou art about to lose;" which seems a good reading; and the Arabic version, and some other copies, "which thou art going to reject."

For I have not found thy works perfect before God] Meaning that the reformers, and reformed churches, stuck where they first began; and did not carry their works neither with respect to doctrine, and especially with respect to discipline and worship, to a greater perfection, as they ought to have done; and however perfect they might appear before men, they were not so in the sight of the omniscient God, nor found so by Christ, before whom all things are naked and open: the Arabic version reads, "before me;" and the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "before my God." This church, though she has departed from the corrupt church of Rome, and from her evil doctrines and practices; yet did not go on to that perfection which might have been expected and desired, and which would have rendered her praise-worthy, whereas she is now discommended. It is an observation of a Jewish writer (b), that "if one departs from an evil way, and does not do that which is good, he does not *וַיַּעַשׂ מַעַלְמָו*, "make his work perfect," and he is not pronounced blessed."

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard] That is, hast received upon hearing; for hearing goes first, and then receiving: the design of the advice is to put this church in mind of the doctrines of grace she had heard at the beginning of the reformation, from Luther and others; such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon through his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, doctrines now almost lost and buried in forgetfulness; wherefore Christ would have her remember these things; how that she heard them with attention, reverence, humility, and without prejudice; and with much affection, so as to approve and love them, believe them, feel the power of them, and taste the goodness in them; and how she received them, with all meekness, readiness, and joy, when now they are greatly disliked and rejected by many; very few attend to the doctrines of the reformation. This is exactly our case.

And hold fast] The above doctrines, though the majority is against them, and learned men despise them,

(b) R. David Kimchi in Psalm l. a.

them, and they are charged with enthusiasm and licentiousness. It looks as if there was danger, as there is, that they would be entirely wrested out of her hands.

And repents] Of her deadness, coldness, and indifference to these truths; of her unwatchfulness over them, and imperfection in them; not carrying truth to its fulness and perfection, resting in her first light and knowledge, and even going back from that.

If therefore thou shalt not watch] And preserve truth, and hold fast the form of sound words, and keep to the order, as well as the faith of the Gospel, and constantly attend divine worship, and look for the coming and kingdom of Christ.

I will come on thee as a thief] In the night, and at an unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; which must be understood of coming to her in a way of rebuke and chastisement, by bringing some affliction, or suffering some sore distress to fall upon her: the phrase, *on thee*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Ethiopic version.

And thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee] Which though applicable to the spiritual coming of Christ in the next church-state, and to his second coming in his kingdom and glory, which will be both sudden and unexpected, yet these will be to the joy and comfort of the church; whereas what is here spoken, is by way of threatening, and must relate to some severe dispensation on her; and which we might now justly expect, were we not in the unwatchful, unthoughtful, and ignorant situation here described.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis] The Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "but thou hast a few names," &c. or "a few men," as the Ethiopic version renders it; who were called by name, and were men of renown, excellent men, men famous for holding the truth of doctrine, and for powerful and practical godliness; men of great light and grace, and who were known by name to God and Christ: these are said to be but *few*, not in comparison of the world, in which sense all the elect of God are but few, though a large number considered in themselves; but in comparison of formal lifeless professors of religion, with which this church-state abounds; and which, if we were not as dead

as we are, might easily be observed; these may not only be hypocrites in churches, but a majority of them: yea, these few may be understood in comparison of the greater number of true believers; for in this period of the church, there are but few even of them, that are lively, zealous, and careful, and are heartily concerned for the purity of doctrine, discipline, worship and conversation; and a few there are, blessed be God, even in this our Sardinian church-state. God will have a few in whom he will be glorified in the most declining times; and the Lord knows, and takes notice of these few; and for their sake the church-state is kept up, the Gospel, and its ordinances, are continued; nor is a church to be judged of by the number of its members, nor is a multitude to be followed to do evil.

Which have not defiled their garments] The Ethiopic version adds, "with a woman," the woman Jezebel. They were not guilty either of copulor or spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; they kept their outward conversation-garments pure, and maintained a profession of Christ, and his truths, incorrupt; they did not defile it by an unbecoming walk, or by a denial of Christ, and a departure from him; and by embracing false doctrines; they were neither erroneous in their principles, nor immoral in their practices; few there are indeed of this sort. Defiled garments, in either sense, very ill become members of the reformed churches. Among the Jews⁽¹⁾, if a priest's garments were spotted or defiled, he might not minister; if he did, his service was rejected.

And they shall walk with me in white] There is a walking in Christ by faith; and a walking before him, as in his sight; and a walking worthy of him, in all well-pleasing, in his ways and ordinances; and here a walking with him, in a way of special and comfortable communion, both here and hereafter; and this is *in white*, in white raiment, meaning either in the robe of his own righteousness; compared to fine linen, and white; or in the shining robes of immortality and glory; and may be expressive of that spiritual joy, which such shall be partakers of, as well as of their spotless purity and innocence in the other world. White raiment was used among the Romans as a token of joy, at festivals, and on birth-days, and at weddings, and such like times.

For they are worthy] Not of themselves, or through any works of righteousness done by them, which are neither meritorious of grace here, nor of glory hereafter; but through the grace of God, and worthiness of Christ. The Jews have a say-

(1) T. Bab. Zetachim, fol. 35. 2.

ing somewhat like this (1); "they that walk with God in their life-time, *עֲשֵׂה*, "are worthy" "to walk with him after their death;" see 2 *Esdas* ii. 40. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

[*He that overcometh*] The deadness, formality, and imperfection of this church-state; gets over these things, and is among the few names in it.

[*The same shall be clothed in white raiment*] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "thus shall he be clothed in white raiment;" he shall have abundance of spiritual peace and joy, great success and prosperity, both inward and outward, in himself, and in the church; and triumph over all his enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and every other enemy; and not only be clothed with change of raiment, the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, but shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness: the allusion seems to be to the custom of the Jewish Sanhedrim in judging of priests, fit for service (1); "they examined the priests concerning their genealogies and blemishes; every priest in whom was found any thing faulty in his genealogy, he was clothed in black, and veiled in black, and went out of the court; but every one that was found perfect and right, *לְבָשׁ לְבָשׁ*, "he was clothed in white," and went in and ministered with his brethren the priests."

[*And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life*] By which is meant the choice of persons to everlasting life and salvation; and this being signified by a book, and by writing names in it, shows the exact knowledge God has of his elect, the value he has for them, his remembrance of them, his love to them, and care for them; and that this election is of particular persons by name, and is sure and certain; for those whose names are written in it, shall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and can never become reprobates, or shall ever perish; because of the unchangeableness of the nature and love of God, the firmness of his purposes, the omnipotence of his arm, the death and intercession of Christ for them, their union to him, and being in him, the impossibility of their

seduction by false teachers, and the security of their persons; grace, and glory in Christ, and in whose keeping this book of life is; which respects not this temporal life, that belongs to the book of providence, but a spiritual and eternal life, from whence it has its name.

[*But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels*] Which shows that Christ has an exact and perfect knowledge of all the chosen ones, he knows them by name; and that he has a strong and affectionate love for them, and is not ashamed of them, of their cause, of their persons, and of their relation to him; and that he does, and will own, acknowledge, and approve of them, both here and hereafter: and the confession he will make of them will be in their praise; in praise of their persons, and the comeliness of them, which he has put upon them; and of their graces, though they are his own; and of their good works, as the fruits of grace: and this will be made before his Father, who chose these persons, and gave them to him, to preserve and save; and before the angels, who rejoice at their salvation and happiness; and this will be at the last day; see the note on *Matt.* x. 32.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See the note on chapter ii. 7.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth:

[*And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write*] Of the city of Philadelphia, see the note on chapter i. 11. According to the Apostolical Constitutions (m), one Demetrius was ordained bishop of this church, by the apostle John; but this is not to be depended on; nor is it known who this angel was: however, certain it is there was a church in this place in the second century, in the times of Ignatius who wrote an epistle to it, and which then had a bishop or pastor over it, whom he mentions (n), though not his name. And in the same century twelve Philadelphians suffered martyrdom at the same time Polycarp did (o); in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, there was a church here, and

(1) Talmud Haggagah, fol. 10. 3. (2) Maimon. Bieth Hamikdash, c. 6. §. 11. Min. Middot, c. 5. §. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1.

(m) Lib. 7. c. 46.

(n) Ignat. Epist. p. 39. Ed. Voss.

(o) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

and bishops of it (p); and there are now a pretty many that bear the name of christians, of the Greek church, in this place (q). This church is an emblem of, and represents the church in that period of time, in which will be the spiritual reign of Christ. Its name signifies brotherly love, which in this interval will be very remarkable; saints shall not envy, vex and distress one another any more; they shall be one in the hand of the Lord, and among themselves. Love, which is now so cold, and so much wanting in our present Sardin church-state, will be exceeding warm, and fervent, and in its highest pitch in the Philadelphian state. The characters Christ here assumes, point at the holiness of life, truth of doctrine, and purity of discipline, for which this church-state will be distinguished: in this period of time an open door for the Gospel will be set; it will be preached in its power and purity, and will be greatly succeeded; the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Jews will be converted; hypocrites and formal professors will be discerned, and detected; great honour and respect will be shown the church by all men; and this state will be an emblem and pledge of the new Jerusalem state, of which mention is made in this epistle, or the thousand years personal reign of Christ with all his saints.

These things saith he that is holy] Which character not only agrees with Christ, as God, who is the holy one of Israel, and equally glorious in holiness as his Father, but as man; his nature was free from original sin; his life from any actual transgression; his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works, and all his administrations in each of his offices: and as mediator, he is the cause and author of holiness to his people; they are sanctified in him, and have their sanctification from him, and are sanctified by him: this character he chooses now to take, because he was sending an epistle to such as were lovers of holiness, and famous for it, both internal and external; so that while he describes himself, he points at persons, the members of churches in this interval.

He that is true] Truly God, and truly man; true and faithful in the discharge of his several offices, and in the trust reposed in him, both of the grace and persons of the saints, and in what he undertook to do for them: he is truth itself, the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; and the sum and substance of all the truths of the

Gospel; and is therefore to be depended on in every prediction and promise; and this title of Christ may have some view to the truth of doctrine which shall, in this period, prevail, and to the faithfulness and integrity of his people to his cause and interest.

He that hath the key of David] Mention is made of David, because he was a type of Christ; and because from him Christ came according to the flesh, and whose throne he was to sit upon, in a spiritual sense; and because, in this period of time, the Jews are to be converted, who will seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and by *the key of David* is meant, the key of the house of David; that is, the church of Christ, of which David's house and family were a type: and this key is either the key of knowledge, or it is expressive of power and authority. Christ has the key of knowledge, he knows all the persons of his people, all their affairs, and what they do in his house, and how they behave there: he has the key of knowledge in the scriptures, and gives it to his ministers. And it may also design his authority in his house and church, in fixing the ordinances of it, in bestowing gifts on men, and in dispensing the blessings of grace and goodness; this may have some regard to the pure discipline of this church, as well as to its light and knowledge in the doctrines of the Gospel. The Targum on *Isaiah* xxii. 22. interprets, "the key of the house of David," of *judah*, "the dominion" or government of the house of David.

He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth] He opens the scriptures, which are shut to a natural man; as he did in his own personal ministry, when here on earth, and now by his Spirit; and none can shut them, either men or devils, or hinder the spread of light and knowledge by them: he opens the door of the Gospel, and gives an opportunity to preach it, and liberty of mind and expression to his ministers, and a door of utterance to them, and of entrance for it into the hearts of men, which none can shut, or hinder: he opens the door of the church, which is himself; and lets in his sheep, into the sheep-fold, into a Gospel church-state, and the ordinances of it; and he opens the door of heaven by his blood and righteousness, and gives his people liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and brings many sons to glory in spite of all the opposition of men and devils: on the other hand, when he pleases, he shuts up the scriptures, and the eyes of men from seeing what is in them; he shuts up the door of the Gospel, and forbids

(p) Eccl. H. R. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

(q) Smith. Notitia, p. 243.

the preaching of it in this and that place; and the door of heaven will be shut by him at the last day, when all called to the marriage of the Lamb are entered, and there will be no opening. This shows the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ, and which he will exercise in this church-state; see *Job* xii. 14. A like phrase is in the Talmud (r), כִּין שֹׁמֵר שֹׁב אֵינוֹ מִמּוֹ, "when he shuts again, there is none that opens."

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

I know thy works] Good works, of faith, love, and patience; and which lay much in preaching, professing, and maintaining the pure Gospel, and in acts of charity to one another; and which were done to some degree of perfection, and with great sincerity; since this church is not complained of, that her works were not perfect before God, as the former church is.

Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it] Or "which no man can shut," as read the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This *open door* may design an uncommon opportunity of preaching the Gospel; and a very great freedom of mind in the preachers of it, and great attention in the hearers, whose hearts will be opened to observe, receive, and embrace it; and a very large gathering in of souls to Christ, and his churches; much and frequent preaching of the word with great success, which it will not be in the power of any creature to stop or hinder: now will the abundance of the sea, the forces of the Gentiles flow in, and the nation of the Jews shall be born at once.

For thou hast a little strength] Which is not to be understood of inward spiritual strength, for of this the church in this period will have a great deal, as well as of courage and fortitude of mind, but outward power and authority: some great men, and princes of the earth, will come into the churches of Christ, even kings will come to the brightness of her rising; for now will all those prophecies have their accomplishment, which respect the secular grandeur of the church, with regard to its numbers, power, and riches; see *Isaiah* xlix. 18—23. and chap. lx. 3—17.

And hast kept my word] Both the commands and

ordinances of Christ in practice, and that in their primitive purity, as they were delivered by Christ, and his apostles, particularly baptism and the Lord's supper; which have been, one or other of them, or both, most sadly corrupted in all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apostolical one, but will now be restored to their pristine purity and glory; and also the doctrines of the Gospel, which will be kept, not in memory only, but in the heart and life; they will be publicly and openly preached, professed, and defended.

And hast not denied my name] Christ himself, his doctrine respecting his person, office, and grace, neither in words, nor in works, but both ways confessed and owned it.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan] Which may be understood either of the papists, the followers of the man of sin, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and whose doctrines are the doctrines of devils, many of whom will now be converted, and brought to the true church; or rather of the Jews, who had, and have, and will have till this time, their synagogues for religious worship in their way; but they are no other than synagogues of Satan; the men that assemble in them are of their father the devil, and do his works, and will do them.

Which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie] They are Jews by name and nation; they are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly and spiritually, *Rom.* ii. 28, 29. they are carnal wicked men, under the influence of Satan, though they pretend to be religious men, and worshippers of God.

Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet] The conversion of the Jews is here intended. The worship here spoken of, is not either a religious or civil worship of the church, for the church is not the object of worship; only, before whom, and at whose feet this worship shall be given to God in the most humble and hearty manner: the sense is, that the convinced and converted Jews shall come to the church, and in the most lowly and contrite manner, acknowledge their former blindness, furious zeal, and violent hatred of the christians, and shall profess their faith

(r) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2. Yalkut Simoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 3.

in Christ; shall join themselves to the church, and partake of the ordinances of the Gospel with them; and shall worship God and Jesus Christ, their Lord and King, in their presence, and at their feet.

And to know that I have loved thee] The Gentile church, and the members of it, in assuming human nature, and dying for, and redeeming them, as well as the Jews; in sending his Gospel to them, and calling them by his grace, and planting them into Gospel churches; giving them a place, and a name in his house, better than that of sons and daughters.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience] The Gospel so called, because it gives an account of the patience of Christ, in the midst of all his outward meanness and humiliation; and because it is a means of implanting and increasing the grace of patience, which God is the efficient cause of, and Christ is the example of; that patience, which bears a resemblance to his, in enduring afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, desertions, and temptations, and in waiting for his kingdom and glory; and because both the preachers and professors of the word have need of patience, and should exercise it in like manner, as Christ did. This word, the churches, in the Philadelphian state, will keep pure and incorrupt, and observe the ordinances of it according to the directions given in it; and will believe the promise of Christ's personal coming, and patiently wait for it: wherefore, Christ promises, as follows,

I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth] This hour seems to refer not to any of the vials which will be poured out on the antichristian states, but to some affliction and distress which will befall the reformed churches, and will light upon the outward court worshippers among them. It seems to be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, and to denote some violent and sharp persecution, such as what Daniel mentions, that never was before, nor since; but it will be but short, but one hour, the twenty-fourth part of a prophetic day or year, perhaps, about a fortnight; yet it will be very extensive; it will reach all the world, the whole Roman empire, and all that dwell upon the earth, that are called

by the name of christians, and will try them, whether they are so or no; Christ will now have his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of all his formal professors, and hypocrites; and it will be known who are his true churches, and pure members; and these he will keep close to himself, and preserve safe amidst all the distress and confusion the world will be in. This cannot refer to the bloody persecutions under the Roman emperors, for from those the church at Philadelphia was not preserved. We read (1) of twelve members of it that suffered with Polycarp.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Behold, I come quickly] To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; to help and deliver, save and preserve the truly godly among them; to destroy antichrist and introduce the latter day glory.

Hold that fast which thou hast] Either her grace in the exercise of it, as her faith, patience, &c. or rather the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which she had received, as delivered by Christ, and his apostles; and which she had held in the truth and purity of them, and is now exhorted to hold them fast, since his hour of temptation would be a trying time, to her faith, patience, integrity, and constancy.

That no man take thy crown] Not eternal happiness, called a crown of life, glory, and righteousness, and which was prepared for her, and promised to her, and would be certainly given her; nor was there any danger of another's taking it from her; not but that exhortations of this kind to the saints are necessary, with respect to that, to excite to diligence, care, and watchfulness; and are no ways contrary to their final perseverance, and certain salvation, but are means thereof; but either her honour for her faith, and faithfulness, for her integrity, sincerity, and purity, is here meant; or the glorious things which were spoken of this church-state, and to be accomplished in it, *Psalm lxxxviii. 3. see Isaiah lx.*

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which

(1) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 23.

which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him my new name.*

Him that overcometh] In the hour of temptation, in this period of time; that stands his ground then, sustains the shock of the beast, with courage and intrepidity, and overcomes him.

Will I make a pillar in the temple of my God] By which is meant not the church triumphant, though such will have a place, and an abiding one there; but the church militant, so called in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, for its author, matter, situation, strength, solidity, magnificence, and stateliness, and for its holiness; and may be said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and is the place where he dwells, and is worshipped; and the temple of Christ's God, as he is man and mediator, through whom all worship is given to God in it; and those who are overcomers by the grace and strength of Christ, are made pillars by him here, in allusion to the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple; that is, they become very ornamental in the church, they are made honourable members of it; they come in at the right door into it, and fill up their places, and all relative duties in it, and walk becoming their profession; and like pillars, are a support to it, to the interest of the church, the truths of the Gospel, and to weak and poor saints; and as pillars, they are upright in heart and conversation, and are steady, firm, and constant.

And he shall go no more out] Out of the church, the temple of the Lord, but shall abide in it unto death: it is a promise of perseverance both in the grace of God, and in a profession of religion; there shall not be such instances of apostasy as now.

And I will write upon him the name of my God] In allusion to inscriptions of names on pillars; the sense is, that it should be manifest, that such are interested in God, as their covenant God and Father, in like manner as he is the God and Father of Christ; and this should be as plain and as evident, as an inscription on a pillar, or as if it was written upon their foreheads, as the high priest had on his forehead written, *holiness to the Lord*; and indeed it will be by their holiness that it will so clearly appear that God is their covenant God; for in this church-state, or spiritual reign of Christ, holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses.

And the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem] In allusion to *Jebovab Shammab*; meaning the Gospel church in the latter-day

glory; and the sense is, that such shall be manifestly citizens of this city, in this new and glorious state of the church, and shall enjoy all the privileges of it, which at this time especially will be many and great. This will not be the new Jerusalem church-state, or the thousand years reign of Christ in person, for in that there will be no temple, as in this; but it will have the name, and some appearance of it; it will bear some resemblance to it, and be a pledge of it.

Which cometh down out of heaven from my God] As it is before called new Jerusalem, in distinction from the old, so here it is said to come down from heaven, or to be the heavenly Jerusalem, in distinction from the earthly one. The inhabitants of it will be born from above, and be called with an heavenly calling, and their conversation will be in heaven, and all the glory of this church will come from God.

And I will write upon him my new name] Either the name of *Jebovab* our righteousness; or rather the name of King of kings, and Lord of lords, *Rev. xix. 16.* which Christ will now acquire, or at least this will now be made more manifest upon the destruction of antichrist, in this church-state; in which conquest he will make all his people sharers, and they shall now more openly appear to be kings, and to reign with him in his spiritual kingdom.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See the note on chap. ii. 7.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write] Of the city of Laodicea, see the note on chapter i. 11. there was a church here in the times of the apostle Paul, by whom it was founded, is not known; mention is made of it in *Col. ii. 1, 2.* and chapter iv. 13, 15, 16. who was now the angel, or pastor of it, whether Epaphras, who is there named, or another, is not certain. According to the Apostolical Constitutions (1), Archippus was ordained bishop of it by the apostles; see *Col. iv. 16, 17.* There was a church here; in the second, fourth, fifth, and seventh centuries, we read of a church and bishops here (2); but

(1) Lib. 7. c. 46.

(2) Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg, cent. 4. c. c. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 413. cent. 7. c. 8. p. 3. c. 7. p. 128. c. 10. p. 234.

now it is even without inhabitants (*w*). This church represents the state of the church, from the end of the spiritual reign of Christ, till the time of his personal appearing and kingdom, to judge the quick and dead; for after the spiritual reign is over, professors of religion will sink into a formality, and into a lukewarm frame of spirit, and into great spiritual sloth and security, *ψ*. 15, 16. which will make those times like the times of Noah and of Lot; and such will be the days of the coming of the Son of man to judge the world. Its name signifies either "the righteousness of the people;" and so may point at that popular and external righteousness, which the majority of the professors of religion in this period of time, will be boasting of, and trusting in; being self-sufficient, and self-dependent, when at the same time they will be naked, as well as poor, and blind, *ψ*. 17, 18. or it signifies "the judging of the people;" for this church-state, at the end of it, will bring on the general judgment; the judge will now be at the door indeed, standing and knocking; and they that are ready to meet the bridegroom, when he comes, will be admitted into the nuptial chamber, and sit down with him in his throne, in the thousand years kingdom, at the close of which will be the second resurrection, when all the people, small and great, shall be judged, *ψ*. 19—21.

These things saith the Amen] See *Ishaiab* lxxv. 16. The word *Amen* is the name of a divine person with the Jews, and it seems the second person; for so on those words in *Prov.* viii. 30. *then was I by him as one brought up with him*, they observe (*x*) do not read *Amon*, the word there used, but *Amen*; and a little after *Amen*, they say is the *notarion*, or sign of אמן מלך נאמן, "God the faithful king;" they make (*y*) *Amen* to be one of the names of the second Sephira, or number in the Cabalistic tree, by whom the second person in the Godhead seems to be designed: and they say (*z*), that the word *Amen*, by Gematry (or numerically) answers to the two names *Jeboab*, *Adonai*. Christ may be so called, because he is the God of truth, and truth itself; and it may be expressive of his faithfulness, both to God his Father, and to his people, in whom all the promises he either made, or received, are yea and amen; and also of the firmness, constancy, and immutability of Christ, in his nature, person and offices, in his love, fulness of grace, power, blood,

and righteousness; and is very appositely assumed by him now, when he was about to give the finishing stroke to all covenant-engagements, and to all promises and prophecies; see chapter i. 18.

The faithful and true witness] Who as he was in the days of his flesh, see the note on chapter i. 5. so he will be at the day of judgment, a swift witness against all ungodly men; and he may the rather take up this title, not only on that account, but to shew that the description he gives of the state and condition of this church is just, *ψ*. 15, 16. and to engage it to take his advice the more readily, *ψ*. 18. and to assure it of the nearness of his coming, *ψ*. 20. and to strengthen the faith of his people, and quicken their hope and expectation of the happiness with him promised; *ψ*. 21. the same character is given to the Logos or Word of the Lord, by the Targumist in *Yer.* xlii. 5. "let the word of the Lord be to us, אמן וזמן שוין" אמן, for a true and faithful witness;" the phrase here used.

The beginning of the creation of God] Not the first creature that God made, but the first cause of the creation; the first parent, producer, and efficient cause of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlasting Father of every one that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age, and Gospel dispensation; the maker of the new heaven, and new earth; and so a very fit person to be the judge of the whole world, to summon all nations before him, and pass the final sentence on them. The phrase is Jewish (*a*); "and Abraham said unto his servant, this is *Metatron*, (or the Mediator) the servant of God, the eldest of his house;" for he is, חזקתו ברייתו של משיח, "the beginning of the creation of God," who rules over all that he has; for to him the holy blessed God has given the government of all his hosts." Christ is the מלך, "the prince," or governor of all creatures.

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

I know thy works] Which were far from being perfect, and not so good as those of the former church.

That thou art neither cold nor hot] She was not cold, or without spiritual life, at least in many of her

(w) Smith. Notitia, p. 150. (x) Zohar in Deut. fol. 121. 4. so in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 179. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 2. Yalkut Simoni, par. 2. fol. 46. 1. (y) Cabal. Denud. par. 2. p. 7. (z) Lex Cabal, p. 230. & Baal Hattutim in Deut. xxviii. 35.

(a) Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 2.

her members, as all men by nature are, and carnal professors be; she was alive, but not lively: nor was she wholly without spiritual affections and love, to God, and Christ, to his people, ways, truths, and ordinances; she had love, but the fervency of it was abated: nor was she without spiritual breathings, and desires altogether, as dead men are; or without the light and knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and she was not *hot*; her love to God and Christ, and the saints, was not ardent and flaming; it was not like coals of fire, that give a most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench. She had not fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord; nor was she zealous for the truths of the Gospel, and for the ordinances of it, and for the house of God, and its discipline; nor did she warmly oppose all sin, and every error, and false way.

I would thou wert cold or hot] Which must be understood, not absolutely, but comparatively; and not that it was an indifferent thing to Christ, whether she was one or the other; but he alludes to what is natural among men, it being generally more agreeable to have any thing entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither; and so uses this phrase to shew his detestation of lukewarmness, and that it is better to be ignorant, and not a professor of religion, than to be a vain and carnal one; Christ desires not simply, that she might be cold, but that she might be sensible of her need of spiritual heat and fervency.

16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot] A lukewarm professor is one that serves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is best, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, though indifferent to it, and contents himself with it; and is unconcerned about the life and power of godliness, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the interest of Christ and truth; and this was too much the case of this church, at least of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathsome to Christ, hence he threatens,

I will spue thee out of my mouth] This shews how nauseous lukewarmness is to Christ, inasmuch that on account of it he would not own and acknowledge her as his; but even cast her out, unchurch her, and have no more any such

imperfect church-state upon earth, as he afterwards never will, this is the last; nor is there any church-state, or any remains of one in Laodicea; it is indeed quite uninhabited.

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Because thou sayest, I am rich] In worldly goods, which occasioned a lukewarmness, as riches often do, and her vanity, pride, and arrogance, afterwards expressed. Laodicea was a very rich city, and so will be this church-state, through the accession of kings and princes, and great men of the earth unto it, in the former period: riches seldom do any good to the churches of Christ, they did not in Constantine's time; and it seems that even at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ they will be of bad consequence, since they will usher in the Laodicean church-state: or her meaning is, that she was rich in spiritual things; not in grace, but in external gifts, which still remained, upon the very great pouring forth of the Spirit in the last church-state; and in good works, on which she too much trusted for salvation, placing her righteousness in them: she is one whom the Jews (c) call עשיר בחורין, "rich in the law."

And increased with goods] With outward peace and prosperity, with much natural and divine light and knowledge, with the purity of Gospel ordinances, even beyond the former church-state in her own imagination.

And have need of nothing] Contenting herself with these external things: true believers, as considered in Christ, stand in need of nothing indeed, they are compleat in him, and have every thing in him; but as considered in themselves, they are daily in need of daily food for their souls, as for their bodies, of fresh light and life, strength and comfort, and of new supplies of grace; wherefore this church shews great ignorance of herself, as well as great pride and arrogance, to express herself in this manner.

And knowest not that thou art wretched] As all men are in a state of nature and unregeneracy; which may be the case of many professors, and they be ignorant of it; as to be under a sentence of wrath, obnoxious to the curses of the law, in danger of hell and destruction, lost and undone, and

(c) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 106. 2.

and unable to extricate themselves out of such a state: true believers account themselves wretched, as the apostle Paul did, on account of indwelling sin, and the plague of their own hearts, which the members of this church, the greater part of them, were ignorant of.

And miserable] A miserable man is one that is attended with outward afflictions, but this was not the case of this church; and with spiritual poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and this was her case; some persons neither know their misery, nor their need of mercy.

And poor] Not in purse, nor in spirit, nor with respect to outward afflictions, nor as to her church-state, but in a spiritual sense; one whom the Jews call (ד) רש בחורר, "poor in the law;" as such may be said to be who have nothing to eat that is fit to eat; nothing to wear but rags, and have no money to buy either; who are in debt, and not able to pay, nor to help themselves on any account; and this may be the case of professors, and yet not known and considered by them.

And blind] Natural men are blind as to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, as to the way of salvation by Christ, as to the plague of their own hearts, as to the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, and as to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them; but here it regards blindness with respect to her church-state, and its imperfection.

And naked] Sin has stripped man of his moral cloathing; man's own righteousness will not cover his nakedness; and whoever is destitute of the righteousness of Christ is a naked person.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

I counsel thee] Christ is a counsellor, and is every way fit to be one, for he is the all-wise God, the ancient of days, and the father of his people, and as mediator, the wisdom of God; and he was concerned in the council of peace from everlasting; and when he was here on earth he gave counsel in person, and now he gives it by his Spirit, and by his word and ministers; and the substance of it is, to come to him for grace, life, and salvation; for pardon, peace, and righ-

teousness; for spiritual light and knowledge, and every supply of grace; and his advice is always wholesome, good, and suitable, is hearty, sincere, and faithful, and is freely given, and is wise and prudent; and being taken, infallibly succeeds; the counsel here given follows.

To buy of me gold tried in the fire] By which is meant either a more pure and glorious state of the church, such as was in the former period, or greater; or a larger measure of light and knowledge in the Gospel, which is better than fine gold; or some particular graces, and a comfortable exercise of them, as fervent love, and strong faith, which is much more precious than gold; or rather, all spiritual riches in general, which are in Christ, and are unsearchable, solid, substantial, and satisfying; are lasting and durable, precious, excellent, and incorruptible: and the buying of this gold is not to be understood in a proper sense, by giving a valuable consideration for it, for no such is to be given, but in an improper sense; it is a buying without money and without price; Christ and his grace are given freely; Christ, of whom it is to be had, and of him only, does not sell it, but he gives it to those that come to him for it, and desire to have it, and are willing to part with all so they may but enjoy it; for that it is to be understood in such a sense, is clear from the character of the persons who are advised to buy, who were poor, or beggars, י. 17. the end of it is,

That thou mayest be rich] For though this church was rich, yet not in spirituals; and though she was rich in her own conceit, yet not really so: persons are not to be accounted truly rich who have only this world's goods; none are rich but those who have an interest in Christ and his grace; and they who are poor in this world, and yet have grace, are really rich: the next thing advised to is,

And white raiment] That is, and buy white raiment, by which some understand the heavenly glory, robes of immortality, a being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven; this may be compared to raiment, for it is glory, an immortality, an incorruption to be put on; and fitly enough to white raiment, for the purity and spotlessness of it; and being clothed with this, no nakedness, or shame of it will appear; and this is to be had from Christ, and in the same way as gold is to be bought of him; the design of this advice may be to quicken the desires of the church after heavenly things; though it rather seems to respect something suitable to her in this present state: wherefore others think, that by it are meant good works, holiness of life and conversation;

(d) Vajikra Rabba, §. 34. fol. 173. 4. vid. Targum in Cant. viii. 9.

tion; but these are never called white raiment, but even rags, yea filthy ones in the best; and whatever cover they may be from nakedness in the sight of men, they are no cover from it in the sight of God, no do they preserve from shame and blushing: rather then by it is meant the righteousness of Christ, which may be compared to raiment; it is upon the saints, and is put upon them as such; it covers as a garment does, protects from injuries, keeps warm, beautifies and adorns as raiment does; and it may be compared to white raiment, for its purity and perfection; now this is to be bought of Christ, it is to be had of him, and is to be had of him freely, without money and without price; it is a free gift of grace; and even faith itself, which receives it, is the gift of God: the ends of giving this advice are,

That thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear] The soul may be naked when the body is well clothed; and notwithstanding a man's moral righteousness, he may not be clothed; they, and they only are clothed, who have on the righteousness of Christ; nakedness arises from want of righteousness, which is only covered by the righteousness of Christ; and from hence also springs shame, which Christ's righteousness hides.

And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve] By which may be meant the word of God, particularly the Gospel; and anointing with it is making use of it for the gaining of light and knowledge: all without this divine revelation are in darkness, and such who reject the authority of it go astray; the scriptures are the only directory, and rule of faith and practice; the law is a means of enlightning persons to see their sin and misery, and the danger they are in; and the Gospel is a light, whereby is beheld the glory of Christ, of his person and office, of his grace and righteousness, and of salvation by him; and this is the Gospel of Christ, and is to be had of him freely, even the saving knowledge of it. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used, into their language, and apply it to the law; says R. Chija (e), speaking of the law, "קִיּוּרֵי לֵצֵן", "it is a salve for the eye," a plaister for a wound, &c. it is a "salve for the eyes, as is written *Psalms* xix. 8." or else the illumination of the Spirit is meant, by which the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, men see themselves, the impurity of their hearts and nature, the imperfection of their righteousness, their impotency to all that is spiritually good, and that they are lost and undone

in themselves; and by which they see Christ and salvation by him, that it is in him, and in no other, and that it is full and suitable, and for the chief of sinners, and that it is all of free grace, and that they have an interest in it; by this they have light into the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of the glories of another world; and this is to be had of Christ, who gives his Spirit freely, and an understanding to know spiritual things: and the end of the advice is,

That thou mayest see] Who notwithstanding the conceit she had of herself, was blind; persons may have much human prudence, much knowledge in things moral, yea, in things evangelical, notionally, and yet be blind as to true spiritual light and experience; they only see spiritually and savingly who have the Spirit of God.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten] The persons, the objects of Christ's love here intended, are not angels, but the sons of men; and these not all of them, yet many of them, even all who are his own by his Father's gift and his own purchase; and who are called his church, and sometimes represented as such who love him and obey his commands: the instances of his love to them are many; as his suretyship-engagements for them, his assumption of their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring their peace and pardon, bringing in a righteousness for them, purchasing their persons, his intercession for them, preparations in heaven, supplies of grace, and frequent visits in a kind and familiar manner; and as for the nature of his love, it is free and sovereign, everlasting and immutable, and it is matchless and unconceivable, it is strong and affectionate, and as his Father loved him; and such are rebuked by Christ, not in a way of wrath, but in a tender manner, in order to bring them under a conviction of their sin, and of their duty, and of their folly in trusting in, or loving any creature more than himself, and of all their wrong ways; and they are chastened by him, not in a vindictive, but in a fatherly way, which is instructive and teaching to them, and for their good. This seems to refer to some afflictions which Christ was about to bring upon this church, by some means or another, to awaken her out of her sloth and security, and which would be in love to her, and the end be to rouse her zeal, and bring her to repentance. Some think this respects the Gog and Magog army, which will encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; but that will not be till after the

(e) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 96. 3. Debarim Rabba, §. 8. fol. 243. 3. & Vajikra Rabba, §. 12. fol. 155. 3.

the thousand years reign, and besides will be no affliction to them; rather it designs the unchurching them, signified by spueing them out of his mouth, *ψ. 16.*

Be zealous therefore, and repent] Zeal was what was wanting in this church; which is nothing else than hot, fervent, and ardent love, love in a flame, whereas she was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, Christ would have her be zealous for God; for his cause and interest, for his Gospel, ordinances, and the discipline of his house, and against every thing that is evil; against all false worship, all errors in doctrine, all sin and iniquity; and to be zealous of good works, and in the worship of God, both private and public: and *repent*; in an evangelical way, of her lukewarmness, remissness, and supineness; of her pride, arrogance, and vain boastings of herself; and of her self-sufficiency, self-dependence, and self-confidence.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock] The phrase of standing at the door, may be expressive of the near approach, or sudden coming of Christ to judgment, see *James v. 9.* and his knocking may signify the notice that will be given of it, by some of the immediate forerunners and signs of his coming; which yet will be observed but by a few, such a general sleepiness will have seized all professors of religion; and particularly may intend the midnight-cry, which will, in its issue, rouse them all.

If any man hear my voice] In the appearances of things, and providences in the world.

And open the door] Or shew a readiness for the coming of Christ, look and wait for it, and be like such that will receive him with a welcome.

I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me] To and among these will Christ appear when he comes in person; and these being like wise virgins, ready, having his grace in their hearts, and his righteousness upon them, he will take them at once into the marriage-chamber, and shut the door upon the rest; when they shall enjoy a thousand years communion with him in person here on earth; when the lamb on the throne will feed them with the fruit of the tree of life, and lead them to fountains of living water, and his tabernacle shall be among them.

VOL. V.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

To him that overcometh] The lukewarmness, and self-confidence, and security of this state.

Will I grant to sit with me in my throne] At the close of this church-state; which will be the last of this kind, consisting of imperfect saints, Christ will descend from heaven, with the souls of all the righteous, and raise their bodies, and unite them to them; which, with the living saints, will make one general assembly and church of the first-born, all perfect in soul and body; among these he will place his tabernacle, and fix his throne; and they being all made kings, as well as priests to him, shall now reign on earth with him, and that for the space of a thousand years: and this is the blessing promised the overcomers in the Laodicean state, that when Christ shall set up his kingdom among men, and reign gloriously before his ancients, they shall sit on the same throne with him, or share with him in his kingdom and glory; see chapters *v. 10.* and *xx. 4.* and *Dan. vii. 27.*

Even as I also overcame] Sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell.

And am set down with my Father in his throne] In heaven, at his right hand; which is expressive of equality to him, distinction from him, communion with him, and of the honour and glory he is possessed of; but it is not on this throne that the saints will sit, only Christ sits on the same throne with the Father in heaven; it is on Christ's throne on earth, or in his personal reign there, that the saints shall sit down with him; and which honour they shall all have, all that are more than conquerors through him, and are made kings by him. And when this reign is over, then will follow the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the wicked, when will come on the judgment of the people, as Laodicea signifies; and when these, with the devils, will form themselves into the Gog and Magog army, and attack the beloved city, the church of glorified saints on earth, under Christ their king, which will issue in the everlasting destruction of the former; and thus these seven churches bring us to the end of all things.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

See the note on chapter ii. 7.

• O o o

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

This chapter contains an account of the second vision John saw, as preparatory to the sealed book, and the opening of it, as the first vision was to the epistles to the seven churches. The preface to this vision, or the introduction to it, and preparation of John for it, are in *ch.* 1, 2. which declare the time of it, the position John was in, what he saw and heard, a call to him to come up, and the effect it had upon him; and then follows the vision itself, which is of a throne, described by the place where it was set, in heaven; and by him that sat upon it, *ch.* 2. who was like to a jasper and a sardine stone; and by what was about it, first a rainbow of an emerald colour, *ch.* 3. then four and twenty seats, with as many elders upon them, sitting clothed and crowned, *ch.* 4. and by what went out from it, lightnings, thunders, and voices; and by what were before it, seven burning lamps, which are the seven spirits of God, *ch.* 5. and a sea of glass like crystal; and by what were between it all around, and the elders, four living creatures, described in general, by their being full of eyes, before and behind, *ch.* 6. in particular, the first by its likeness to a lion, the second by its likeness to a calf, the third by its likeness to a man, and the fourth by its likeness to a flying eagle, *ch.* 7. and by what were common to them, first by their wings, of which they had each of them six; and by their eyes, they were full of within; and by their constant employment in celebrating the perfections of God, and in giving glory, honour, and thanks unto him, *ch.* 8, 9. at which time also the four and twenty elders appear in a worshipping posture, and give adoration to God; partly by deeds, casting their crowns before his throne; and partly by words, ascribing glory, honour, and power to him; giving a reason for it, taken from his creating all things for his pleasure, *ch.* 10, 11.

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

After this I looked] After John had seen the vision of Christ, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand; after he was bid to write what he had seen, and

what were, and should be hereafter; and after he had by order written the seven epistles to the seven churches, he looked about him to see what else he could, having his desires and expectations raised of seeing more, and other things, for the eye is never satisfied with seeing; though this is to be understood, not of looking with the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his mind; of his beholding things in a visionary way, as the prophets did, whence they are called *seers*, and their prophecies *visions*: how long this was after the first vision is not certain, it may be but a few minutes; and it is to be observed, that as the first chapter of this book, with the vision in it, is the preface or introduction to the church-prophecy delivered out in the seven epistles; so this, and the following chapter, with the vision therein, contain the preface or introduction to the book-prophecy exhibited in the opening of the seven seals of the sealed book.

And, behold, a door was opened in heaven] Not in a literal sense, as the heavens were opened at Christ's baptism, and at Stephen's martyrdom; but in a figurative sense; and the phrase is to be understood of a discovery of things that were, or were to be in the church of God, which in this book is oftentimes signified by heaven; and it must be conceived as done in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel in the visions of God, was brought to Jerusalem, and the temple there, and in at a door was shewn all the abominations committed in the court and temple; so John, in a visionary way, through an opened door, had a scene of things in the church presented to him, as follows.

And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me] This voice is not called the first voice with respect to any other voices that were to follow; but it designates the former voice, the voice that John heard behind him, when he saw the first vision; and this, as that, was clear, loud, and sonorous as a trumpet, so that he thoroughly heard, and rightly understood what was said; it was the same person that made the following representations of things as did then, even he who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the whole revelation; the word *first* is left out in the Arabic version: the allusion is to the blowing of trumpets at the opening of the door of the temple. "every day there were one and twenty soundings of a trumpet in the temple, three, *שלושה קולות*, "at the opening of the doors," and nine at the "daily morning sacrifice, and nine at the daily even sacrifice (*f*). And one of them was called

(*f*) *Mish. Succa, c. 5. §. 5.*

called the great door of the temple; and he that slew the daily sacrifice, did not slay till he heard the sound of that door when it was opened (g); so here at the opening of the door in heaven, in the church, of which the temple was a type, the voice of the Son of God is heard, as the sound of a trumpet, talking loudly and familiarly to John.

Which said, Come up hither] From the isle of Patmos, where he was, up to heaven; not into the third heaven, where Paul was caught up, but rather up into the Gospel church, the Jerusalem which is above; though this, as before, is to be understood in a visionary way, in like manner as Ezekiel was lifted up by the Spirit between the earth and the heavens; and so John, in a vision, was called up from Patmos, into the air, where he had a representation of the church made unto him.

And I will shew thee things which must be hereafter] In the world, in the Roman empire, and in the church of God, to the end of the world; not but that there were some things shewn him, as before, in the church-prophecy, which had been, and were, and which was done to give him a complete view of things from first to last: and these things were shewn in the following visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who talked with him, and to whom this revelation was given to shew unto his servants; and it was of things that *must* be, because determined and resolved upon in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

And immediately I was in the spirit] As he had been before, chapter i. 10. it seems he had been some little time out of his ecstasy, how long cannot be said, and now upon this new scene of things, returned to it; upon the opening of the door in heaven, and hearing the former voice, and the things it said, the Spirit of God at once possessed and filled him, in an extraordinary manner; and his soul or spirit was immediately taken from the consideration of all sensible objects, and was fixed and intent upon the things presented to it in the vision, so that it was, as if it was out of the body. The Arabic version reads, "then therefore I went in the Spirit;" in obedience to the voice that called him up, in which he was assisted by the Spirit of God, who lifted him up as he did Ezekiel, when he saw what follows.

(g) Mish. Tamid, c. 3. §. 7.

And, behold, a throne was set in heaven] Not for the final judgment, on which the son of man will sit, when he comes to judge the quick and dead, for he is not the person that fills this throne; but this is a symbol of the power, authority, and dominion now exercised by God, not over the world in general, who has prepared his throne in the heavens, and governs among the nations, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, but which he exercises in his church, signified by *heaven*. The allusion is to the temple, and the throne of God in it, *Isaiah vi. 1. Jer. xvii. 12.* The temple was an emblem of the Gospel church, Jerusalem, or the Gospel church-state, and was to be called the throne of the Lord, *Jer. iii. 17.* and now his throne is set there. Here he exercises a jurisdiction and government; he is king and lawgiver in it; he has enacted laws, and he writes them on the hearts of his people, and puts his Spirit within them, and makes them both able and willing to obey them.

And one sat on the throne] Not the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, which some think are signified by the three precious stones in the next verse, the Jasper, Sardine, and Emerald; for as distinct from him that sat upon the throne, the Lamb is said to be in the midst of it, and the seven Spirits of God are said to be before it: nor is Jesus Christ intended, and his two natures; his divine nature by the Jasper, and his human nature by the red and blood coloured Sardine; since he, the Lamb, is represented as in the midst of the throne, and is often distinguished from him that sat upon it; see chapters v. 6, 7, 13, and vii. 10. but God the Father is designed, who sits on the throne, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, yet in distinction from them. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper] For the brightness, glory, and majesty of his countenance, and for his being light itself, clothed with it, and dwelling in it; see chapter xxi. 11, 18, 19. and for the various perfections of his nature, as eternity, infinity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, power, goodness, truth, love, grace, and mercy; for the *jasper*, at least one sort of them, is of various colours, and spotted with divers spots; that which

is most valued, is the green, spotted with red, or purple (*b*): hence, this stone, which is the twelfth in the high priest's breast-plate, and on which the name of Benjamin was written, is called, by the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos on *Exodus* xxviii. 20. *Pantere*, and of Ben Uzziel, on the same place, *Apanturin*, and on *Cant.* v. 14. *Apantor*, because some are variegated and spotted like Panthers.

And a sardine stone] The same with the Sardius; and so read here the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Arabic versions, as in chapter xxi. 20. and in *Exodus* xxviii. 17. on which Reuben's name was written; this is of a red, or blood colour, as its name, סַרְדִּיּוֹן, in Hebrew, shews, and the same that is called a Cornelian; and is expressive of the fiery indignation of God, whose fury is poured out like fire, and who, nakedly and absolutely considered, is a consuming fire to the wicked, his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people. Some Jaspers being white and sky coloured, and the white colour being most agreeable to deity, as Cicero says (*i*), and the Sardine being red, and a gem of the ruby kind, make up the description of the church's beloved; *Cant.* v. 10. and may denote in general his purity, glory, and excellency, and in particular goodwill to his people, and wrath to his enemies. And to the comfort of the former it is added,

And there was a rainbow round about the throne] Which signifies the covenant of grace; see *Gen.* ix. 12, 16. *Isaiah* liv. 9, 10. *Ezekiel* i. 28. The rainbow is a reverberation, or a reflection of the beams of the sun upon a thin watry cloud; and the covenant of grace is owing to Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness; it is he that has formed it, and filled it with blessings and promises; he is the mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and who in chapter x. 1. is represented as clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head: the rainbow is of various colours, and fitly expresses the various promises and blessings in the covenant of grace, and the various providences, both prosperous and adverse, with respect to soul and body; and as the rainbow was an emblem of mercy, peace, and reconciliation, in God to man, after he had destroyed the world by a flood, so the covenant is a covenant of grace and mercy; it springs from it, and is full of it, and provides for the peace and reconciliation of the people of God, by the blood of Christ; whence it is called a covenant of peace: and as the rainbow is a security to the world, and the inhabitants of it,

from a destruction by a flood any more, so the covenant is a security to those who are interested in it, from eternal destruction, and wrath to come; herein lies all their salvation, and this is the security of it: to which may be added, that God calls it, *my bow*, as he often calls the covenant of grace, *my covenant*, in distinction from man's; see *Genesis* ix. 12. *Psalms* lxxxix. 28, 34. *Ezek.* xvi. 60—62. and this being round about the throne of God, shews, that the covenant of grace does, as it were, include and inclose God in his persons, and in his perfections; all the three divine persons have a concern in it, and all the divine perfections are glorified by it; and it being around it, it is always in his view; he is ever mindful of it, and constantly remembers it for the good of his people, and faithfully keeps it; and it being in this form, denotes, that in whatsoever way he comes forth unto his people, it is always in a covenant way, whether it be in things temporal or spiritual, in adversity or prosperity, with regard to the things of time and eternity; nor is there any coming to him with comfort, but as he is encompassed with the rainbow of the covenant; stript of this, he is like the jasper and sardine stones, full of sparkling majesty, dread and terror, so that there is no coming nigh him; but being encircled with the rainbow, he may be approached as a covenant God, as the God of all grace, seated on a throne of grace, whither believers may come with boldness, freedom and cheerfulness: and this rainbow was,

In sight like unto an emerald] The stone on which Judah's name was written, in the high priest's breast-plate; this is of a green colour, which colour is the prevailing one in the rainbow; it is of an exceeding fine green, very delightful to the eye, and gives pleasure to the mind to look upon it: and what a lovely and delightful sight is the covenant of grace to a believer! to see God as a covenant-God, Christ as the mediator of it, the exceeding great and precious promises and blessings, both of grace and glory, which are in it, yields an unspeakable pleasure to such persons; the covenant of grace, like the emerald, is ever green, it is always new; its promises and blessings are always fresh, and like that, it is durable; it is sure, and cannot be broken, and is more immoveable than rocks and mountains: the emerald is very bright, clear, and transparent; it is reported of Nero (*k*), that he could see in his emerald the combat of the gladiators in the theatre; in the covenant of grace, as in a glass, may be seen the glory of all the three persons in the God-head,

(*b*) Albert, *Magn. de reb. Metall.* l. 2. c. 8. *Roccus de Gemmis*, l. 2. c. 2. (*i*) De Legibus, l. 2.

(*k*) *Roccus de Gemmis*, l. 2. c. 4.

head, for it is ordered in all things for the glory of each person; as also all the perfections of the divine nature; here God appears abundant in goodness and truth; here mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other: to which may be added, that the emerald is said (1) to help and refresh the memory; now though God stands in no need of any thing to bring things to his remembrance, yet such is his condescension to men, that he sets the rainbow in the cloud, to look at, that he might remember his everlasting covenant; and so he allows his people to put him in remembrance, by making mention of the covenant of his grace, and pleading the promises of it. The Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version, instead of *קַדְמָה*, "a rainbow," read *קִדְמָה*, "priests."

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And round about the throne were four and twenty seats] In a semicircular form, as the rainbow also was; the throne being at the upper end, these seats, or thrones in the above form, came to both ends, or sides of it; just as in the Sanhedrim, or great court of judicature among the Jews sat (*m*), the *Nasi*, or prince, sat in the uppermost seat, at his right hand was *Ab betb din*, or the father of the Sanhedrim, and at his left hand a doctor or wise man, and all the rest of the members sat in a semicircular form upon seats before them, so that they could see them all; and to this the allusion might be thought to be, did their numbers agree, but in the great Sanhedrim there were seventy-one, and in the lesser, twenty-three, which last comes very near the number here.

And upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting] By whom are meant not the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, as some of the ancients thought, and also some of the modern writers, as lord Napier, and others; for the things said of them are such as cannot be applied to inanimate things, such as sitting on seats; being clothed with white raiment, having golden crowns on their heads, falling down before the throne, and worshipping him that sat on it; and besides, in chapter v. 8, 9. they are said to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, out of every kindred,

tongue, people, and nation; for which last reason, angels also cannot be designed, and who moreover, in the place referred to, are manifestly distinguished from these elders; nor are they to be understood as the representatives of the Jewish church, or of the Jewish and christian church together, as triumphant in heaven, and so be signified by the twelve patriarchs, and twelve apostles, which together make up twenty-four; but rather the members of the Gospel church-state, throughout the whole of it, in every succession and period of time, are here meant; and are expressed by the number *twenty-four*, in allusion to the twenty-four courses of the priests, into which they were divided by David, 1 Chron. xxiv. 1, 4, 18. and to the twenty-four stations of the Levites, who in turn attended the service of the temple daily, and represented the whole body of the people of Israel, in putting their hands upon the sacrifices, and praying for them; of which see the note on Luke i. 5. add to this, that in twenty-four places the priests and Levites kept watch in the temple (*n*); so these twenty-four elders before the throne of God, in his temple, represent the whole Israel of God, all the members of the Gospel church-state, from the first to the last of it: and they are styled elders, not on account of office, as pastors of the churches are called, but because of their senile gravity, prudence, and knowledge; they having a greater degree of spiritual knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God, than the Jewish church, which was in a state of infancy, and under tutors and governors, had; but the Gospel church is in a state of manhood, and no longer under a school-master, and so fitly expressed by elders; and these are represented as sitting on their seats, not only to hear the word of God, but as judging in cases that come before them, respecting the admission or exclusion of members, the laying on, or taking off of censures, &c. and these, their seats being around and near unto the throne, denote their nearness to God, and their communion with him, in his house and ordinances, and his dwelling in the midst of them.

Clothed in white raiment] In the pure and spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, which is comparable to fine linen, clean and white; and is the righteousness of the saints in common, of every true member of Christ's body.

And they had on their heads crowns of gold] Being made by Christ kings, as well as priests, unto God; for so these four and twenty elders are said to be, in chapter v. 10. and they now reign as kings

(1) Rozus, ibid. & Albert. Mago, de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.
(*) Milin. Sanhedrim, c. 4. §. 3. & Maimon, Hilchot Sanhedrim, c. 1. §. 3.

(n) Mifn, Middot, c. 1. §. 1.

kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and have a kingdom of grace which shall never be removed; and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then reign with him to all eternity in heaven. It is a common saying with "the Jews (o), that there is no eating and drinking in the world to come, but the righteous "are sitting, וְעוֹשֵׂי צְדָקָה בְּרָאשֵׁי, "and their "crowns upon their heads."

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices] Which may be understood either of the doctrines of the Gospel, which come out of Zion, and out of Jerusalem, the church of God, where he has his throne; and which are comparable to lightening, both for the light and knowledge they give, and for the swiftness with which they were spread over the world, by the apostles of Christ; and to thunderings for the awfulness, authority, and majesty of them, especially as they were delivered out by the Boanergesses, or sons of thunder; and as the prophecies of the prophets are called *the voices* of the prophets, *Acts* xiii. 27. so may the doctrines of the Gospel be called *voices*, as they are the voice of God, and of Christ, and of his ministers; and are voices of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. The allusion is to the giving of the law on mount Sinai, when such things were seen and heard, *Exodus* xix. 16. or else the judgments of God, and the punishments inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, and his awful threatenings of them, may be designed; see *Psalms* xviii. 13, 14. *Joel* iii. 16. with which compare *Rev.* viii. 5.

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God] In allusion to the seven lamps in the tabernacle and temple, which were trimmed by the priests, and always kept burning, and are expressive of the Spirit, and his gifts; and these being signified by the number *seven*, denote the fulness and perfection of them; and being said to be *before the throne*, shew that there is always a sufficiency of them for the supply of the churches in all ages, to fit

and qualify proper persons to minister the word, and administer ordinances; and these being called "lamps of burning fire," point at the light, the Spirit of God in his gifts communicates to the churches; and that warmth and heat, comfort and refreshment, conveyed to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the dispensation of the ordinances of it, under his illuminating and quickening influences.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal] By which is meant, not heaven, nor the souls of the blessed there, nor the multitude of the holy angels, nor the first converts to Christianity at Jerusalem; for those that got the victory over the beast are said to stand upon this sea, chapter xv. 2. which these senses, especially the three last, will by no means admit of. Some by it understand the world, which may be compared to a *sea*, for the multitude of people in it, as many waters in this book signify people and nations, chap. xvii. 15. and to a *sea of glass*, which is brittle, for the frailty and transitoriness of the world, of the fashion of it, and of men and things in it; and to the clear *crystal*, because all things in it are open and manifest to the omniscient eye of God; but the world, and men of it, used not to be compared to a still and quiet sea, as this is, but to one disturbed and troubled by winds and tempests, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, *Isaiah* lvii. 20. Others think the ordinance of baptism is designed, of which the Red sea, through which the Israelites passed under the cloud, was an emblem; and which may be compared to a *sea of glass*, for its transparency, it clearly expressing the sufferings, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and to *crystal* for its purity; and to all this for its cleansing nature, as it leads unto the blood of Christ; and its being before the throne, may denote its being the way of entrance into the Gospel church. Others think the blood of Christ is meant, in allusion to the brazen sea in the tabernacle, which was made of the looking-glasses the women brought, and for the priests to wash in, before they entered on business, *Exodus* xxx. 18. and chapter xxxviii. 8. and to the molten sea in the temple, which was for the same purpose, *1 Kings* vii. 23. Christ's blood is the fountain opened to wash in for sin, and may be compared

(o) Zohar in Num. fol. 106. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ibid. fol. 96. 3. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Abot R. Nathan, fol. 1. 3. Caphtor, fol. 82. 2. & 86. 2. & 108. 2. & Nishmat Chajim, fol. 30. 2.

to a sea for its abundant efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and it is this which makes way to the throne, and to him that sits on it; and is a special privilege enjoyed by those who come to mount Zion, or into a Gospel church-state; there is always this laver to wash their garments in, and make them white: though this sea being of glass, seems not so much designed to wash in; and therefore rather I think by it is meant the Gospel, compared to a sea for the deep things of God, and mysteries of grace which are in it; to a sea of glass, because in it is beheld, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, of his person, office, and righteousness, as well as many other wondrous things; and to one like crystal, for the clearness, perspicuity, and evidence of the truths contained in it; and to a fixed, still, and quiet sea, because it is the Gospel of peace, love, grace, and mercy, and brings peace, joy, and tranquillity to troubled minds, when the law works wrath: but here are no tossing, foaming, raging waves of wrath, and fury, but all smooth, stable, solid, tranquil, and quiet. And this is said to be before the throne, where the rainbow of the covenant is, of which the Gospel is a transcript; and where the four and twenty elders, or members of churches be, for their delight and comfort; and where the seven spirits of God are, to furnish men with gifts to preach it; and where the four living creatures, or ministers of the word, have their place, who officiate in it. Agreeable to this figurative way of speaking, the Jews call (p) the law, *תורה*, "the sea of the law," and the "sea of wisdom;" and frequently give the characters of such and such a doctor, as being very expert and conversant, *בין הים* "in the sea of the Tal-mud, or doctrine (q)." The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read, "there was as a sea of glass," somewhat that looked like one. The word *glass* is left out in the Ethiopic version, but very aptly is it so described, the colour of the sea being sometimes green like that of glass.

And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts.] Or living creatures, as the word may be better rendered, agreeable to *Ezekiel* i. 5. to which reference is here had; and by whom are meant not the angels, though there are many things which agree with them; they are said to be the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth, *Zech.* vi. 5. They may be rightly called living creatures, since they live a most happy life in hea-

ven; their situation is before the throne, and in the presence of God; and their being so sedulous, diligent, and watchful in doing the will of God, may be signified by their being

Full of eyes before and behind] And within; their strength may be fitly expressed by the lion; their indefatigableness in the service of God, by the ox; their wisdom, prudence, and knowledge by the face of a man; and their swiftness in obeying the divine commands by the flying eagle; their number of wings agrees with that of the seraphim in *Isaiah* vi. 2. to which the allusion seems to be; and their work in continually ascribing glory to God, suits with them: to which may be added, that the Jews often speak of four angels, *לכסס סבב*, "round about his throne," that is, the throne of God; whose names are Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael; the three first they place in this manner, Michael at his right hand, Uriel at his left, and Gabriel before him (r). Sometimes thus, Michael on his right hand, Gabriel on his left, Uriel before him, and Raphael behind him, and the holy blessed God in the middle; and they are expressly called (s) by them the four living creatures, meaning in *Ezekiel's* vision; and they make mention of the intellectual living creatures, which are, *סורין לכסס* "round about the throne (t)." Notwithstanding all this, the angels cannot be intended, because these four living creatures, are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in chapter v. 8—11. nor are the four Gospels, with the four Evangelists, here meant; for whatever agreement may be fancied there is between these, and the likeness of the living creatures; as that Matthew may be signified by the creature that has the face of a man, because he begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Christ; as Mark by the lion, because he begins his Gospel with the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and Luke by the ox, because he begins his Gospel with an account of Zacharias the priest, offering in the temple; and John by the eagle, because he begins his Gospel, the first face or leaf of it in a very high stile, and with the divinity of Christ: and with what truth soever it may be said of these, that they are full of divine light and knowledge, and swiftly spread it in the world, and are continually giving glory to God; yet it cannot be said of them, with any propriety, as is said of these four living creatures, that they fall down before God, and worship him, and are redeemed by

(p) Zohar in Num. fol. 90. 3. & 92. 1. & in Lev. fol. 24. 3. & in Deut. fol. 118. 4. Tikkune Zohar apud Rittangle. not in Jetzira, p. 133, 134. (q) Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 2. & 47. 1, 2.

(r) B-midbar Rabba, § 2. fol. 179. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4. (s) Zohar in Num. fol. 91. 3. (t) Raya Mehimna in Zohar in ibid. fol. 95. 4.

by the blood of the Lamb: besides, these four are represented as calling to John at the opening of the first four seals, to come and see what was to be seen; and one of them is said to give to the seven angels the vials of wrath to pour out, chapters v. 8, 9. and vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. and xv. 7. to which may be added, that this sense is attended with this inconvenience, that it makes John to be one of the four creatures which he saw: nor are four particular apostles, as Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, pointed at, as others think; nor the pure apostolical church, for the church is represented by the four and twenty elders, and these four living creatures are distinguished from the hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion, chapter xiv. 1, 3. Dr Goodwin has a very ingenious thought upon these words, could it be supported, he thinks, that these four living creatures design the four officers in the christian church, the ruling elder, the pastor, the deacon, and the teacher; the ruling elder by the *lion*, who needs courage to deal with men in case of sins; the pastor by the *ox*, for his laboriousness in treading out the corn; the deacon by that which has the *face of a man*, it being necessary that he should be merciful and pitiful to the poor, as is the heart of a man; and the teacher by the *flying eagle*, who is quick to espy errors, and soars aloft into high mysteries: but then it should be observed, that there is no such officer as a ruling elder in the church, distinct from the pastor; and that the pastor and teacher are one; so that there are but two sorts of officers in the church, pastor and deacon; see *Phil.* i. 1. to which may be added, that the four living creatures are all in the same situation, and are alike full of eyes, and have the same number of wings, and are employed in the same work; all which cannot be said equally of church-officers. By the these four living creatures, I apprehend, we are to understand the ministers of the Gospel in general, in the successive ages of the church, to whom all the characters do well agree. And though they may not be all found in every one, at least not in all alike, yet they are in one or another of them, and in them as together considered. They are said to be *four*, being fewer in number than the members of the church, which are signified by the twenty-four elders, and yet a sufficient number; and in allusion to the four standards of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, to which there seems to be some reference in the whole of this account, as the tabernacle there was placed in the midst, so the throne of God here; as the priests and Levites were round about that, so the four and twenty elders here; as there were seven lamps, over-

against the candlestick in the tabernacle, continually burning, so there are seven spirits here before the throne; and as there were four princes, who were standard-bearers, placed at the four corners of the camp, so here four living creatures, or ministers of the word, who are standard-bearers: the standard of Judah, with Issachar, and Zabulon under him, was at the east of the tabernacle; and Ephraim, with Manasseh and Benjamin, at the west; Reuben, with Simeon and Gad at the south; and Dan, with Asher and Nephthali at the north; and the Jewish writers say (*u*), that on Judah's standard was the figure of a lion, on Ephraim's the figure of an ox, on Reuben's the figure of a man, and on Dan's the figure of an eagle; and to which the four living creatures are likened here. And this number *four* may be the rather mentioned, with respect to the four parts of the world, and corners of the earth, whither the ministers of the Gospel are sent to preach, and whither their commission reaches; there being of the elect of God in all parts to be gathered in by their ministry: and very properly may they be called *living creatures*, because they are alive in themselves, being quickened by the Spirit of God, or otherwise they would not be fit for their work; and because their work requires liveliness in the exercise of grace, and fervency in the performance of duty; and because they are a means in the hand of God, of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints by the word of life, which they hold forth: the situation of these four living creatures agrees with them, who are said to be both in the midst of, and round about the throne, and so were nearer to it than the four and twenty elders, and were between that and them; as the ministers of the Gospel are set in the first place in the church; have nearness to God, and much of his presence, which is particularly promised them; and stand between God and the people, and receive from the one, and communicate to the other, and lead on the worship of God, as these four do; see *1. 9, 10*. And these are said to be *full of eyes*; of spiritual light, and evangelical knowledge; and they have need of all the eyes they have to look into the scriptures of truth, to search and pry into them, and find out the sense and meaning of them; to overlook the flock committed to them, they have taken the oversight of; to look to themselves, their doctrine, and their conversation; to espy enemies and dangers, and give notice of them to the churches; to look to God upon the throne, and to the Lamb in the midst of it, for fresh supplies

of

(*u*) Aben Ezra in Num. ii. 2.

gifts and grace; and to see to it, that all their ministrations tend to the glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the good of souls. And they had eyes *before and behind*; *before* them, to look to the word of God, and the deep things in it, which continually lies before them, and to the things that are yet to come relating to the kingdom and church of Christ; and *behind* them, to observe, how all sacrifices and types, predictions and promises have had their accomplishment in Christ; they have eyes before them to watch over the church, they are in the midst of, and which is the flock that is before them; and eyes behind, to guard against Satan, and his emissaries, false teachers, who sometimes sily and secretly come upon the back of them; they have eyes before them, to look to him that sits upon the throne, on whom their dependence, and from whom their expectations are; and they have eyes behind them, to look to the four and twenty elders, the members of churches, to whom they minister.

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

And the first beast was like a lion] And this figure expresses the strength of the ministers of the word, the lion being the strongest among beasts, *Prov. xxx. 30.* to do the work they are called to, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, and to bear the infirmities of the weak; and also it denotes their courage and boldness in preaching the Gospel of Christ, without fearing the faces of men, or of being afraid of their revilings.

And the second beast like a calf] Or *ox*, for so the word here used signifies in the Hellenistic language, and with the Septuagint interpreters, and agrees with *Ezekiel i. 10.* and designs the labourousness of Christ's faithful ministers in treading out the corn of Gospel truth, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are labourers with God; as also their humility, meekness, and patience in bearing insults, reproaches and sufferings for Christ, and instructing those that oppose themselves.

And the third beast had a face as a man] And points at the humanity and tender-heartedness, the wisdom, prudence, knowledge, and understanding, and the use of the reasoning faculty, together with a manly spirit in abiding by the Gospel at any rate; all which are so necessary in the ministers of the word.

And the fourth beast was like a flying eagle] Which

sets forth the sagacity and penetration of Gospel-ministers into the deep things of God, and mysteries of grace, and their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God, in publishing the everlasting Gospel; see chapter xiv. 6.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him] As the *seraphim* in *Isaiah vi. 2.* with two of which they might cover their faces as they did, testifying thereby their reverence of God, when in his presence; and with the other two cover their feet, signifying their sense of their sinfulness, weakness, and imperfection, in their conversation, even in their best works, and in the ministry of the word; and with the other two fly about, as denoting their readiness to minister the word and ordinances, to visit the members of the church, and do all good offices of love and service to them that lie in their power.

And they were full of eyes within] To look into the sin and corruption of their own hearts, which is a means of keeping them humble amidst all their attainments, gifts, and graces, and of qualifying them to speak aptly of the cases of others; and they have eyes within, to look into and consult their own experience; for besides the word of God, which lies before them, they have a testimony in themselves of the truth of the doctrines of the Gospel, which they do well to attend unto; and they have these inward eyes to look into that treasure which God has put into their earthen vessels, in order to bring out of it things new and old.

And they rest not day and night] They give up themselves to the ministry of the word, and prayer; are wholly in these things, meditate on the word continually, and preach the Gospel in season, and out of season.

Saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come] Living under a continual sense of the holiness of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and how necessary holiness is in themselves, who bear the vessels of the Lord, and in the churches and house of God; taking care that all their doctrines are according to godliness, and serve to promote holiness of life and conversation; and also under a sense of the power of God, and of their need of it, to carry them through

their work, and make their ministry successful; and of the eternity and immutability of God, which is a wonderful support unto them amidst all the difficulties and troubles that attend them. The word *holy* is three times used here, as by the *seraphim* in *Isaiah* vi. 3. and in some copies it is repeated six times, and in others nine times, as in the Complutensian edition.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

And when those beasts give glory] When they give God the glory of all his perfections, covenant, and promises, and of all the gifts and grace bestowed on them, and of the success of their ministry; and in it glorify Father, Son, and Spirit, who bear their respective parts in the business of salvation; and ascribe to each their due glory in election, redemption, and sanctification.

And honour] In the several parts of religious worship performed by them; and not with their lips only, but with their hearts also.

And thanks] For all blessings, temporal and spiritual, bestowed on them, and on the saints: even

To him that sat on the throne] God the Father, &c.

Who liveth for ever and ever] He who is the living God, and will always continue so.

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne] The ministers of the Gospel begin the worship of God, and lead in it, who are the four living creatures; when the members of churches, who are the four and twenty elders follow, and approach the divine being in a most humble manner.

And worship him that liveth for ever and ever] In Spirit; and in truth; with faith and fervency, in every part of duty they are directed to.

And cast their crowns before the throne] Signifying, that they received them from him that sits upon it, being by the grace of God what they are; and that they are unworthy to wear them in his presence, being but unprofitable servants in all they do; and hereby also acknowledging their subjection to him as their king and lawgiver. Something like this the Jews relate of the family

above; they say, "When the holy blessed God ascends the glorious throne of judgment," the whole family above tremble; and when they see the holy blessed God, they take their crowns from off their heads—and pray and seek mercy for Israel; and immediately he ascends the throne of mercy (w). And such like actions have been done by kings and princes to one another, in token of subjection. Thus Tigranes, king of Armenia, fell down at the feet of Pompey, and cast his crown from his head, which Pompey replaced; and having commanded him certain things, ordered him to enjoy his kingdom (x): so Herod meeting Augustus Cesar at Rhode, when he entered the city took off his crown, and after a speech made to him, with which Cesar was pleased, he set it on him again (y).

Saying] As follows,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental ones read, "thou art worthy, O Lord, and our God, to receive;" that is, to receive the acknowledgement and ascription of glory, honour, and power; for otherwise, God cannot be said to receive these from his creatures, than by their confessing and declaring that they belong unto him: and that for the reasons following,

For thou hast created all things] The whole universe, the heavens, the earth, and sea, and all that in them are.

And for thy pleasure they are and were created] God is the first cause, and the last end of all things; by his power they are made, and according to his will; and for his own glory, and therefore is worthy of such a doxology; see *Prov.* xvi. 4. *Rom.* xi. 36. What is here said is contrary to a notion imbibed by the Jews (z), that the world was not created but for the sake of the Israelites: and elsewhere (a) they say, "the world was not created but for David; and one says for Moses; and Rabbi Jochanan says for the Messiah;" which last is truest.

CHAP.

(w) Ruzel, fol. 45. 2. (x) Cicero, Orat. pro Sextio, p. 904.
(y) Joseph. Antiq. l. 15. c. 6. §. 5, 7. (z) Zohar, in
Exod. fol. 6. 3. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1. & 163. 3.
(a) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 2.

CHAP. V.

This chapter contains the vision of the sealed book, and the opening of it by Christ, which occasions universal joy among all ranks and sorts of creatures. The book is described by the place where it was, in the right hand of God; by the uncommon manner in which it was written within and without; and by the seven seals it was sealed with, *ψ. 1.* next follows a proclamation made by a mighty angel, with a loud voice, to find out a person worthy and able to open this book, and loose its seal, *ψ. 2.* upon which a declaration is made, that none could be found in heaven, earth, or hell, *ψ. 3.* which had such an effect upon John, that it set him a weeping, *ψ. 4.* but was comforted by one of the elders suggesting, that there was a person that could, and would do it, whom he calls the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David, which are names of Christ, *ψ. 5.* of which he was assured by what he quickly saw, namely, the same person the elder spoken of, described by his position, standing between the throne, and the living creatures, and elders; and by his similitude and likeness, as a lamb that had been lately slain, with seven horns and eyes in him; and by what he did, he went and took the book out of the right hand of God, his Father, *ψ. 6, 7.* This occasioned a general joy among all kind of creatures; first among the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, who are described by what they had, harps and golden vials, the one for praise, the other for prayer; and by what they did, they fell down in a worshipping posture before the Lamb, and sung the new song of redeeming love to him; in which they ascribe worthiness to him, to take the book and open its seals; declare their redemption unto God, by his blood, out of all nations of the earth; take notice of the honour done them by him, in making them kings and priests to God; and express their assurance, that they shall reign with him on earth, *ψ. 8—10.* and next an innumerable company of angels join the living creatures and elders, in a doxology or ascription of glory to him, *ψ. 11, 12.* yea, every creature in heaven and earth, upon it, and under it, and in the sea, are introduced as giving glory both to him that sat upon the throne, and to the Lamb, *ψ. 13.* and the whole is closed by the living creatures saying, *Amen*, to all, and by the elders prostrating themselves, and worshipping the living and eternal God, *ψ. 14.*

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne] Of this throne, and who it was that sat upon it, see the note on chapter iv. 2. and who had in his right hand; or *at*, or *upon* his right hand, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, lying by, or near his right hand; though according to *ψ. 7.* the book appears to have been in his right hand, as our version, and others render it.

A book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals] This book was very much like Ezekiel's roll, *Ezek. ii. 9, 10.* which was written, *פנים ואחור*, *within and without*, before and behind, and indeed it was in the form of a roll: the manner of writing in those times was on sheets of parchment, which, when finished, were rolled up in the form of a Cylinder; hence a book is called a volume. This book seems to have consisted of seven rolls, to which was annexed seven seals; and their being not room enough within, contrary to the common way of writing, some things were written upon the backside of the outermost roll; and such writings were by the ancients called *Opisthographi*; and the word is used by them sometimes for very prolix writings (*b*). By this book some understand the scriptures of the Old Testament, which are written in rolls; see *Heb. x. 5.* *Luke iv. 17, 20.* and which came out of the right hand of God, and were given forth by him; and being written within, and on the backside, may denote the fulness of them, they containing a variety of matter, useful and profitable, for different purposes; or else the literal, and mystical, or spiritual meaning of some parts of them: or, as others think, the more clear explanation of the books of the Old Testament, by those of the New, is meant; and its being sealed may signify the authenticity of those writings, having the seal of God's truth, and the impress of his wisdom, power, and goodness on them; and also the hidden sense and meaning of them, they being especially in the prophetic and spiritual part of them, a sealed book to natural men, and of which Christ is the truest and best interpreter; but then this book was opened, and looked into, and read, and, in some measure, understood, even by the Old Testament saints, and had been before this time expounded

(b) Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 30. & Salmuth in Panciroli, res. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 43. p. 145.

expounded by Christ, concerning himself; yea, he had opened the understandings of his disciples to understand those scriptures, and had counted them, and others worthy, to open and explain this book to others, and had sent them into all the world for this purpose; and for the same reasons it cannot be understood of the Gospel published to Jews and Gentiles, the one within, and the other without; rather therefore the book of God's decrees is here meant, which respects all creatures, and all occurrences, and events in the whole world, from the beginning to the end of time; and so Ezekiel's roll, according to the Targum on *Ezek. ii. 10.* which was written before and behind, signified, that which was, *מֵרֵאשִׁית* to, "from the beginning," and which, *עַד אֶחָדָה* until one, "shall be in the end," or hereafter. This book God holds in his right hand, as the rule and measure of all he does, and of the government of the world, and which he constantly fulfills and executes; and its being written *within and without*, may denote the perfection and comprehensiveness of it, it reaching to all creatures, and things, even the most minute; and its being *sealed*, shews the certainty of its fulfilment, and the secrecy and hiddenness of it, until accomplished; though it seems best of all to understand it of that part of God's decrees relating to the church and world, particularly the Roman empire, which from henceforward, to the end of time, was to be fulfilled; and so is no other than the book of the Revelation itself, exhibited in the following scenes and visions; and this may be truly said to be in the right hand of God, and from thence taken by the Lamb, it being the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, chapter i. 1. and may be said to be written, both *within and on the back-side*, to show, that it contains a large account of things, a long train of events to be accomplished; as also to signify, that it regards the church, and the members of it, who are those that are within, in the several ages of time, and the world, or those that are without; for this book-prophecy regards both the state of the Roman empire, and of the christian church; and its being *sealed*, shews the authenticity, certainty, and also the obscurity of what was contained therein; and with *seven seals*, with respect to the seven periods of time, in which the prophecies in it are to be fulfilled.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice] This was not the uncreated angel, Jesus

Christ; for he is after spoken of as the lion of the tribe of Judah, and as the lamb in the midst of the throne, but a created one; though who he was, whether Gabriel, as some say, because his name signifies the strong or mighty one of God, is not material to be known; angels are said to be mighty, and to excel in strength: this is called so here, chiefly with respect to his voice, which he, by reason of his great strength, exerted so loudly, as to be heard by all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; however, this was not John the Baptist, but if a minister of the Gospel, rather some one since, making the following proclamation.

Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? Suggesting, that if there was any such person, that he was desired to come, and do it; and it seems, that he must not only be one of power and ability, but of dignity and authority, a person of greatness and worth, from whence his ability arises; as he ought to be that can engage his heart to draw nigh to God, and take a book out of his right hand, this mysterious book of the Revelation, as it was indeed whilst sealed; and open and explain it to others, unseal it or exhibit it, as it afterwards was in the following scenes and visions, and give a view of all that is contained in it; and not only so, but fulfil and accomplish all the prophecies in it; and who can, or is worthy to do all this, but he that sits at the right hand of God? and who is God as well as man: and this proclamation was made to stir up an earnest desire in John, and all the saints he represents, to know what was in this book; and to show the impotence of all creatures, to make any discovery of it; and to illustrate, and set off with a greater foil, the glory, excellency, ability, and worth of Jesus Christ. There seems to be an allusion to the president of the temple calling to the priests under him, to attend to the several parts of service assigned them, saying unto them, *מִי שֶׁיֵּשֶׁה*, "whosoever is worthy, let him" do so, and so (c).

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

And no man in heaven] Or *no one in heaven*, whether angels, or the souls of departed saints; neither the one nor the other know any thing of what is to come, until it is revealed unto them.

Nor in earth] Among all the men on earth, even those of the greatest sagacity and penetration, the

the wise, the prudent, the scribe, the disputer of this world, such who are most conversant with books, and have the greatest reach into the things of nature or of grace.

Neither under the earth] The dead buried there, good or bad; which may be said agreeable to the notions of the ancient Jews, who believed the immortality of souls, and that they were rewarded or punished, *וְהַיְדוּת*, "under the earth," according to their virtue or vice in life (*d*): or the devils in hell; or whoever on the earth are influenced by them, as magicians, forcerers, soothsayers, and necromancers.

Was able to open the book, neither to look thereon] Or in it, so as to read it, understand it, and show to John what was in it; for the sense is, there was no creature in heaven, earth or hell, who were masters of the deepest knowledge, and made pretensions to any, that were able to foresee and foretell things to come; or to exhibit the prophecies in this book, and represent them to John in the manner they afterwards were, and much less to accomplish them.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

And I wept much] Not so much on his own account, because he feared his curiosity would not be gratified, and that strong desire answered which were raised in him upon sight of the book, and increased by the angel's proclamation; but for the sake of the church of God, whose representative he was, and to whom the knowledge of this book, and the things contained in it, he judged must be very useful and profitable. The Ethiopic version reads, "and many wept;" many of those that were about the throne, as well as John.

Because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon] Because there was no creature in heaven, earth, or under it, that were of dignity and authority, as well as of ability, to open the book by unsealing it; and read and deliver out the prophecies in it upon the taking off of every seal; and so not to look into it, and foresee and foretell what was hereafter to come to pass, in the church and world: the phrase of being worthy to look on it, seems to be Jewish; of the book of the generation of Adam, *Gen. v. 1.* the Jews say (*e*), that: "it descended to the first man, and by it he knew the wisdom which is above; and this book came to the

sons of God, the wise men of the age, *וְהַיְדוּת* "whoever is worthy to look in it," knows by it the wisdom which is from above." This whole verse is left out in the Alexandrian copy; and the phrase, "to read," is neither in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And one of the elders saith unto me] The Ethiopic version reads, "one of these elders;" that is, one of the four and twenty elders that were round about the throne; not the first of the four and twenty books of the Old Testament; nor the patriarch Jacob, because of the prophecy concerning Shiloh, Judah's son, which stands in *Gen. xlix. 10.* nor Moses, who spoke of the Messiah as the great prophet of the church; nor John the Baptist, who pointed out the Lamb of God; these are all fancies and conjectures. It was one of the members of the christian church, who was near the throne of God, had communion with him, and knowledge of his will, who in this visionary way is represented as comforting John under his sorrow and concern, and giving him information: and sometimes persons of superior abilities may receive instruction from meaner persons, as did Apollos from Aquila and Priscilla: the same said unto John,

Weep not] Cease sorrowing, do not be cast down, nor despair.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda] By whom is meant Christ, who, according to the flesh, was to come of the tribe of Judah; and certain it is, that our Lord sprang from thence: and he is said to be the lion of that tribe, in allusion to the prophecy concerning Judah in *Gen. xlix. 9.* where he is said to be a lion, an old lion stooping down and couching, and on whose standard was the figure of a lion. Christ may be compared to one, because of his great strength, he being the mighty God, the able saviour, and strong Redeemer, and protector of his church and people, and the avenger of their enemies; and because of his courage and intrepidity, when he engaged with Satan, and his principalities and powers, when he bore the sins of his people, sustained his Father's wrath, and the terrors of death set themselves in array against him; and because of the fierceness of his wrath, and fury against the wicked, and for his generosity and lenity towards those that

(d) Joseph. Antiq. l. 19, c. 1. §. 34.

(e) Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2.

that sloop unto him, and obey him. So the Jews say (*f*), that "of Messiah, the son of David, who comes forth from Judah, is it said, *Gen. xlix. 9. Judah is a lion's whelp*;" and a little after, Messiah, the son of David, who is, *מלך*, "a lion," shall be on his right hand, and Messiah, the son of Joseph, who is an ox, on his left hand; so the word of the Lord frequently, in the Chaldee paraphrase, is said to be as a lion (*g*).

The root of David] In like manner is Christ called the root of Jesse in *Isa. xi. 10.* and the meaning either is, that he is a branch that springs out of the roots of Jesse and David, is David's son and offspring, according to his human nature; see chap. xxii. 16. or that he is David's Lord, according to his divine nature; and the metaphor of a root well agrees with him as mediator, he being hidden out of sight, and unknown to a natural man; and may denote his meanness in his state of humiliation, when he was as a root out of a dry ground; and because he is the root from whence all the elect of God spring, in whom they have their being, and by whom they are bore and supported, and from whom are derived to them all the blessings of grace, all their spiritual life, holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance. Now this illustrious person, so described,

Had prevailed] Or overcome all difficulties, being one of worth and value, of great authority and ability.

To open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof] And deliver out all the prophecies in it, and fulfil them; and this through the merits of his blood, and in consequence of his sufferings and death: hence, in the next verse, he is represented as a lamb as it had been slain; and the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, put his worthiness to take the book, and open it, upon his having been slain, and having redeemed them by his blood, *y. 9.* And as he, upon his resurrection from the dead, had all power in heaven and in earth given him, as mediator, for the protection of his church, so he was deserving; and it was fit and necessary that he, as the great prophet of the church, should have and deliver out the prophecies concerning the state and condition of his redeemed ones in all ages.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven

eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts] These words, *in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts*, are left out in the Syriac version.

And in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb] John, upon the intimation given him by the elder, lift up his eyes, and with great earnestness looked about, and saw the person he pointed at, though not in the form of a lion, but in the appearance of a lamb, to which Christ, both in the Old and New Testament, is often compared; and that very aptly, for his innocence and purity of nature; for his harmless and inoffensive conversation; and for his meek and humble deportment throughout the whole of his life; and for his patience at the time of his sufferings and death; and for his usefulness both for food and clothing to his people; and chiefly by his sacrifice for them, typified both by the paslover-lamb, and by the lambs of the daily sacrifice: hence it follows,

As it had been slain] Or "as having been slain;" Christ had been really slain by the wicked hands of the Jews, and not in appearance only; the *as* here, is not a note of mere similitude and likeness, but of reality and truth; see *John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7.* but he was now risen from the dead, and therefore is said to have been slain some time before, though now alive; and he appeared to have the marks of his sufferings and death upon him, as he had after his resurrection the print of the nails and spear, in his hands, feet, and side; and he was as a lamb that had been newly or lately slain: and it may denote the continued efficacy of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, and of his sacrifice to take it away; he was as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, with respect to the continual virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and he will be on the same account, the lamb as it had been slain, unto the end of the world. The position and situation of this lamb were, *he stood in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders*, he stood, being risen from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, but was not as yet set down upon the throne with his Father, but was very near it; he stood before it, ready to be placed upon it, and receive his power and his kingdom; he stood between the throne, and between the living creatures, and the elders, being the mediator between God, and his church, and people; he appeared before the throne, for them, as their advocate, and stood ready to give them all the assistance, and

do

(*f*) Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3, 4.

(*g*) Targum in Hof. v. 14. & chap. xi. 10. & xiii. 7.

do them all the good he could: and this his situation may also denote, that he is continually in view, is always in the sight of God, as the Lamb that had been slain; his blood is carried within the veil, is sprinkled upon the mercy-seat; and is always in sight, and calls for peace and pardon; and God the Father always looks upon it, and to his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction, on account of his people: moreover, his being in the midst of the four living creatures, and elders, may signify his presence in his churches, and with his ministers, which he has promised them to the end of the world. This lamb is further represented, as

Having seven horns] It is very unusual for a lamb to have horns, and especially seven: these horns are expressive of the power of Christ, of his dominion and government, even of his kingly power and authority; so kings are signified by horns in *Dan. viii. 20, 21.* and chapter *vii. 24.* and Christ himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation, *Psal. cxxxii. 17.* *Luke i. 69.* and signify, that upon his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ; and the number *seven* expresses the fulness, and perfection of his power and authority, having, as mediator, all power in heaven and in earth given him; and what is above all power, might, dominion, and every name in this world, and that to come; and may have some relation to the seven states of his churches in so many periods of time; and shew not only that he has power sufficient to protect and defend his people in all times, and to push at and destroy his and their enemies, but to open the then sealed book, and unloose the seals: and as another qualification for this work, it follows,

And seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth] Which some understand of angels, and of a sufficient number of them, which belong to Christ, and are at his command, and who are ready to do his will, and to be sent forth by him, into the several parts of the earth, to execute his pleasure: but these rather design the Spirit of God, and his gifts, which Christ received without measure, both in his human nature, at his incarnation, and after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension; which he bestowed on his apostles and ministering servants, whom he sent forth into all the world, to preach his Gospel with them, and which he has, more or less, ever since continued to do. The Ethiopic version reads, in the singular number, "and this is the Spirit of God which is sent into all the earth;" see the note on chap. i. 4.

these *seven eyes* may design the perfect knowledge of Christ, his foresight of future events; and his all-wise providence, which is always, and every where concerned to fulfil and accomplish them; so that he is every way qualified to take the book of future events, as to the church and world, and reveal it, open and explain it, and fulfil the things contained in it; see *Zech. iii. 9.* and chap. *iv. 10.*

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

And he came] He drew nigh to the throne of God, he engaged his heart to approach unto him, and came up even to his seat, which a mere creature, without a mediator, cannot do.

And took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne] See the note on *v. 1.* it being given unto him, as in chapter *i. 1.* and a commission and authority to open it, and make it manifest to others, and to accomplish the several events, in the several periods of time, it points unto.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints:

And when he had taken the book] The Vulgate Latin version reads, "when he had opened the book," very wrongly; for the opening of it by unloosing the seals, one after another, is hereafter mentioned, in chap. *vi.* but when it was observed, that the Lamb took the book, and his commission to open, unseal, and fulfil it,

The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb] By way of religious worship and adoration of him; which shews, that he was not a mere creature, who assumed human nature, suffered, and died, and is the mediator between God and men, but is truly God, and is the proper object of worship; and so he is regarded by all his faithful ministers, and true churches, which are here signified by the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders; who are represented as

Having every one of them harps] Which were instruments of music, and with which the saints formerly used to praise God, *Psal. xxxiii. 2.* and to may here intend the praises and thanksgivings of the saints, of every one of them, greater or lesser, upon the present occasion; having, their hearts

hearts in right tune, making melody with them to the Lord, and giving thanks unto him for all their blessings, temporal and spiritual, and particularly for the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the book, and unloose the seals.

And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints] This is said in allusion to the golden censers full of incense, which ascended upwards, and was of a sweet smell; the vessels on the shew-bread table, in which incense was put, are by Josephus (*b*) called *golden vials*, as here; his words are, upon the loaves were put two *φιάλαι χρυσταί, golden vials*, full of incense: the prayers of the saints are compared to odours, or incense, as the word may be rendered, and as they are called, *Psalms* cxli. 2. partly because as incense goes upwards, so do they go up to God, and are received, regarded, and had in remembrance by him; and partly because as incense is of a sweet smell, so the prayers of the saints, put up in the name and faith of Christ, are very grateful and acceptable to God: the *golden vials* said to be full of them, may design the hearts of believers, in which they first are, and from whence they proceed; true prayer is that which is inwrought in the soul, and comes from the heart, even from a heart pure like gold, purified by faith in the blood of Christ; a true heart, that asks in faith, nothing wavering; such as are really saints, true believers in Christ, are praying souls; they are full of prayers for themselves, and others; they pray always, and for all saints: this makes nothing for praying to angels and saints departed; for these prayers were their own, and not others; and besides, these four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, were not angels, for they are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in the following verses; nor the saints in heaven, but ministers and churches on earth, and who were to reign with Christ on earth, *ψ. 10.* it may be observed, that the Jews sometimes represent prayer in such like figures as here; "prayer, they say, ascends with those spices which are mentioned in *Cant.* iv. 14. and at the time that prayer ascends it is perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and of this the holy blessed God asks, "who is this that comes up," &c. (*i*) *Cant.* lii. 6." and they say, prayer is greater than all offerings (*k*). See chapter viii. 3.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and

to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and how redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

And they sung a new song] Upon a new occasion and subject, redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the sealed book; and in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea; and this was a most famous and excellent song, an unheard of one, and which none could learn, or sing, but the redeemed of the Lamb.

Saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof] The Arabic version reads, "thou, O Lamb;" the reasons why they ascribe such fitness, ability, and dignity to him, are as follow.

For thou wast slain] By men, and for the sins of men; whereby, as he became worthy in his priestly office to take away the sins of his people, and to have all the glory of their salvation, and in his kingly office, to have all power and authority, and to be exalted above every name, so in his prophetic office, to have perfect knowledge as man and mediator, of all the future events that were to befall his church and people, and to make them known, and fulfil them.

And hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation] This shews that as the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders were not angels, so they were not the representatives of the Jewish church; or the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament; nor even the apostles of the New; for they were all Jews, and could not be said to be redeemed out of every tongue, nation, and people; and also that not the Jews only were redeemed by Christ, but the Gentiles also, and not all mankind, or every individual of human nature; but some out of all the nations of the earth; for God has chosen some, both of Jews and Gentiles, and these Christ has redeemed: and therefore the Gospel is sent unto all nations, that these among them may be called and saved. This redemption of them, supposes them to have been in a state of slavery and bondage, as they are by nature, to sin, Satan, and the law; and signifies a deliverance from such a state, which Christ has obtained, not barely by power, but by price, as the word here used signifies, and may be rendered, "and hast bought us;" and the price with which he has bought them is his own blood, and which is of full and sufficient value, it being not only the blood of a man, of an innocent man, but of one that is God as well as man: and this price was paid

(b) Antiq. i. 3. c. 6. §. 6.
in Exod. fol. 48. 3.
fol. 40. 3.

(i) Raya Mehimna in Zohar
(k) Yalkut Simoni, par. 2.

paid to God, and to his justice, against whom men have sinned, whose law they have broken, and whose justice they have injured and affronted that he might reconcile them to God, bring them near to him, and that they might serve him in righteousness and true holiness.

10 And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

And has made us unto our God kings and priests] See the note on chapter i. 6. The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read *them*, instead of *us*.

And we shall reign on the earth] Meaning not merely in a spiritual sense, through grace reigning over sin and corruption, through Satan being bruised under their feet, and through the victory they have in Christ over the world, but in the millennium-state, in the thousand years reign with Christ in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; see *Rev.* xx. 4—6. The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions read, "they shall reign."

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels] Immaterial spirits, made by Christ, and worshippers of him, and ministering spirits to him and his, the holy and elect angels, who are confirmed in their state by Christ; these John beheld in a visionary way, and heard the voices and articulate sounds formed by them; and there were many of them; how many there are, or were here, cannot be said; we read of a multitude of the heavenly host that appeared at the incarnation of Christ, and of more than twelve legions of angels, that Christ could have had of his father for a word speaking, at the time of his apprehension, who would have rescued him out of the hands of his enemies; yea, that company is innumerable. The Syriac version reads, "as the voice of many waters:" these were

Round about the throne] Were near to God, stood before him, beheld his face, hearkened to his voice, and observed his orders: so with the Jews, the four angels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, are said (1) to be

"round about his throne," the throne of God: it follows here,

And the beasts and the elders] The sense is not, that John heard the voice of the living creatures, and of the elders, as well as, and together with the voice of many angels; for he had heard their voice and song before, but that the angels whose voice he heard, as they were round about the throne, so they were round about the living creatures, and round about the elders: the angels are near unto, and encompass the ministers of the Gospel; they are about them, and give them intimations and discoveries of the mind and will of God, as an angel did to John, *Rev.* i. 1. and another to Paul, *Acts* xxvii. 23, 24. and sometimes direct them where to go and preach the Gospel, as in *Acts* xvi. 9, 10. and surround them for their safety and protection; so horses and chariots of fire, by whom angels are meant, were round about the prophet Elisha, *2 Kings* vi. 16, 17. and they were also round about the elders, the churches, and particular believers; angels and saints are near to one another; the angels are very friendly to the saints, and do them many good offices; they all belong to the same family, and are social worshippers of God; the angels are the guards that encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and often protect them from enemies and dangers: and it may be observed, that the saints are nearer the Lamb and the throne than the angels be; according to this account, there was a throne, and one that sat on it, who is the living God; nearest to the throne stood the Lamb; next to the Lamb stood the four living creatures, the ministers of the Gospel; next to them the elders or churches, and members thereof; and in the outermost ring, and as encompassing all, stood the ministering angels, they being servants; whereas the saints are the heirs of salvation, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, and therefore nearer him.

And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands] That is, an innumerable company of them; a like number is mentioned in *Daniel* vii. 10. to which this seems to refer; see *Psalms* lxxviii. 17. The Jews speak of nine hundred and six thousand millions of ministering angels, that stand continually before the Lord (m).

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Saying

(1) *Benishas Rabba*, §. 2. fol. 279. 1.

(m) *Talkut Simoni*, par. 2. fol. 66. 1.

Saying with a loud voice] To signify their zeal, fervour, and affection for Christ, and to make a free, open, and public acknowledgment of him, and that all might hear of his worthiness, and of the praise and glory that were due unto him.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain] They address him as the Lamb, and not as the Lord of lords, and their Lord; and speak of him as having been slain, and celebrate the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings and death, and ascribe his worthiness to receive glory and honour thereunto; but do not add, as the living creatures and elders do,

And hast redeemed us to God by thy blood] Because, though they were the subjects and objects of confirming grace by Christ, yet not of redeeming grace: it follows,

To receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing] As the book had seven seals to be unloosed, and Christ had seven horns of power and ability to loose them, and fulfil the things contained in it, and seven eyes to look into it, and discover and reveal what is in it, so here are seven words made use of, to express the praise that was due unto him; a like number is used by the angels in chapter vii. 12. and when he is said to be worthy to receive these, it is not to be understood of his receiving the things themselves, but of the praise of them; and that these are to be observed in him, and to be ascribed to him: power belongs to him, as he is the mighty God; and as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and as risen from the dead, and as exalted at God's right hand, and made or declared Lord and Christ; having all power in heaven and in earth: *riches* may well be ascribed to him, who has all the perfections of deity in him; whose are the heavens and the earth, and the fulness thereof; and who as mediator, is heir of all things, and has both the riches of grace and glory in his hands: *wisdom* also is his; he is wisdom itself, he is the only wise God; and he is the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and as mediator, he has the spirit of wisdom and knowledge resting on him, and the treasures of both hid in him: and *strength* may be well attributed to him, which he has shewn in making, and supporting all things; in saving and redeeming his people with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; and in subduing and vanquishing all his and their enemies; and in giving strength to them to discharge their duty, resist temptations, oppose corruptions, and do their generation-work: *honour* is due to him, as the Son of God, he being to be honoured equally as the Father; and who, as man and mediator,

is crowned with glory and honour: *glory* is what ought to be ascribed unto him, even the glory of true and proper deity, and also the glory of salvation; and who as mediator, had a glory promised him, and which was due unto him upon his having finished his work, and which he now enjoys: wherefore *blessing* is to be given to him, who is God over all, blessed for evermore, in himself and the perfections of his nature; in whom all spiritual blessings are, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed; and to whom praise and thanks are to be rendered, for the blessings of pardoning, justifying, and redeeming grace, and for all other.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

And every creature which is in heaven] Animate or inanimate, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, sun, moon, and stars, and the fowls of the air;

And on the earth] Men and beasts, and every creeping things, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars.

And under the earth] In the bowels of it, metals, minerals, and every thing of that kind.

And such as are in the sea] That sail in ships upon the mighty waters, and fishes great and small that are therein.

And all that are in them] In heaven, earth, and sea.

Heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever] All creatures in their way praise God, and are subservient to the glory and interest of Christ, and are the occasion of glorifying of both; and even the enemies of Christ, wicked men and devils, will be obliged to own Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father, as well as angels and saints; and the same glory and honour which are given to the one, are ascribed to the other, which shews the proper deity of Christ, and his equality with the Father. The Syriac version reads, "and I heard him who sitteth upon the throne, saying, To the Lamb, be given blessing and honour, &c." with which compare John v. 22, 23.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the

the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

And the four beasts said, Amen] Giving their assent to what the angels and every creature said, and expressing their desires and wishes that so it might be, and also their faith, that so it was, and would be.

And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever] Either God the Father, who sat upon the throne, and is so described, chapter iv. 9, 10. or else the Lamb who had been slain, and was now alive, and lives for evermore; or both of them, for the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Arabic versions omit the words, "him that liveth for ever and ever," and leave it to be understood of either of them, or both; and the Ethiopic version reads, "and the elders worshipped him;" as the four living creatures and four and twenty elders led the chorus, and begun the song, so they close it, as being the persons more immediately concerned in the death and sufferings of the Lamb, and redemption by him, and in the sealed book, and in the things contained in it; the seals of which are next opened, and an account is given of them in some following chapters.

C H A P. VI.

This chapter contains the vision of the opening six of the seals of the sealed book, by the Lamb, and of the events following thereupon. The preparation to the vision of the first seal is in *ch. i.* the Lamb opens it, John hears a noise like thunder, and one of the living creatures bids him come and see; upon which he saw a horse, of a white colour, and a rider on it, who is described by a bow and crown given him, and by the victory he obtained, *ch. 2.* at the opening of the second seal, the second living creature invites him as before; and he sees a horse, of a red colour, with a rider on it, described by his power, to take peace from the earth, and suffer men to kill one another, and by a great sword given him, *ch. 3, 4.* at the opening of the third seal, the third living creature addresses him in like manner as the other; and he sees a horse, of a black colour, and a rider on it, with a pair of balances in his hands; and hears a voice from among the four living creatures, expressing dearth of provisions, and a charge not to hurt the oil and wine, *ch. 5, 6.* at the opening of the fourth seal, the

fourth living creature speaks to John, as the rest; and he sees a horse, of a pale colour, and a rider on it, described by his name, *Darth*, by his follower, *hell*, or the *grave*, and by his power to destroy a fourth part of the earth with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, *ch. 7, 8.* at the opening of the fifth seal, John saw the souls of the martyrs, under the altar; hears their cry for vengeance; observes that white robes were given them, and that they were bid to be quiet until the slaying and suffering time of their brethren was over, *ch. 9—11.* at the opening of the sixth seal, follow an earthquake, strange changes in the heavens, the sun becomes black as sackcloth, the moon becomes as blood, the stars fall, and the heaven itself departs, and every island and mountain are moved out of their places, *ch. 12—14.* the kings and great men of the earth, and even all sorts of men, upon this, fly to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God the Father, that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, the opener of the sealed book; giving this as a reason for it, that the time of his great wrath was come, and none could stand before him, *ch. 15—17.*

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals] Of the sealed book; one of the seven seals of it, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions, and the Complutensian edition; that is, the first; for *one* is used for *first* in *Gen. i. 5.* *Matt. xxviii. 1.* and as appears from the following seals being called second, third, fourth, &c. These seals express events to be fulfilled; and therefore cannot respect the steps towards, and the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, and that itself, which had been accomplished some years before the vision of the seals; and which vision would have been needless: and these are called seals, because they were sealed among God's treasure, or were resolved on, and decreed by him; and because they were hidden and unknown until they came to pass; and when they were come to pass, they were pledges of what God would do in the destruction of Rome papal; as here in the destruction of Rome pagan: for these seals, at least the first six of them, concern the pagan empire, and the state of the church in it; and are so many gradual steps to the ruin of it, and to the advancing and increasing of the kingdom

kingdom of Christ; and these, with the seven trumpets, which the last seal introduces, reach from the times of the apostles to the end of time, as appears from chapter x. 6, 7. Now the opening of these seals, is the revealing of the events signified by them, and expressed in the hieroglyphics here made use of, and the fulfilment of them.

And I heard, as it were the noise of thunder] A voice very loud and sonorous, exciting the attention of John.

One of the four beasts saying, Come and see] This was the first of the four living creatures, for the word *one* is used in the same sense as in the foregoing clause; and this creature was like to a lion, chapter iv. 7. wherefore his voice was loud, as when a lion roars, chapter x. 3. and is fitly compared to thunder: there is no need to look out for any particular person, as intended by this living creature; or to conclude him to be Peter, as Grotius, who was dead before this seal was opened; or Quadratus, Aristides, and Justin Martyr, who courageously appeared in the christian cause, and made very excellent apologies for it, with success, since these lived under the second seal; it is enough in general to understand the ministers of the Gospel, who, as sons of thunder, loudly and publicly preached the Gospel, and as lions, boldly and bravely defended, and took notice of the power and providence of God in succeeding their ministry, and in weakening the kingdom of Satan in the Gentile world, and particularly in the Roman empire; and therefore are represented as calling to John to *come and see*; observe and take notice of the following hieroglyphic, representing the success of the Gospel ministry. *in 144*, "Come and see," is a phrase often used by the Jews, to stir up attention to what is about to be said; see the note on *John i. 46*.

a And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

And I saw, and behold a white horse] Representing the ministration of the Gospel in the times of the apostles, which were just now finishing, John being the last of them, who saw this vision; and the *horse* being a swift, majestic, and warlike creature, and fearless of opposition and war, may design the swift progress of the Gospel in the world, the majesty, power, and authority with which it came, and the opposition it met with, and which was bore down before it; and

its *white* colour may denote the purity of Gospel truths, the peace it proclaims, the joy it brings, and the triumph that attends it, on account of victories obtained by it, and which is afterwards suggested: white horses were used in triumphs, in token of victory (*n*); a white horse in a dream, is a good sign with the Jews (*o*); and Astrampychus says (*p*), a vision of white horses is an apparition of angels: and so one of those angels which the Jews suppose to have the care of men, and the preservation of them, is said (*q*) to ride by him, and at his right-hand, upon a white horse; but the rider here is not an angel, but the head of all principality and power.

And he that sat on him had a bow] With arrows; the bow is the word of the Gospel, and the arrows the doctrines of it; see *Hab. iii. 9*. *Psal. xlv. 5*. so called for their swift motion, sudden and secret striking, piercing, and penetrating nature, reaching to the very hearts of men; laying open the secret thoughts and iniquity thereof; wounding, and causing them to fall, and submit themselves to the sceptre of Christ's kingdom.

And a crown was given unto him] By God the Father; expressive of Christ's regal power and authority, of his honour and dignity, and of his victories and conquests.

And he went forth conquering, and to conquer] In the ministration of the Gospel, which went forth, as did all the first ministers of it, from Jerusalem, to the several parts of the world; from the east, on which side of the throne was the first living creature, who called upon John to come and see this sight, as the standard of the tribe of Judah, which had a lion upon it, was on the east side of the camp of Israel; and out of Zion, went forth the word of the Lord, which was very victorious, both among Jews and Gentiles, to the conversion of thousands of them, and to the planting of a multitude of churches among them, and to the setting up and advancing the kingdom of Christ; but inasmuch as yet all things are not made subject to him, he is represented as going forth in the Gospel, still conquering, and to conquer, what remain to be conquered: that Christ is designed by him that sat on the white horse, and is thus described, is evident from chapter xix. 11—13. with which compare *Psal. xlv. 3, 4*. though as this emblem may respect the Roman empire, the white horse may be an emblem of the strong, warlike, and conquering state

(n) Victor Aurel, de Viris Illust., in Eur. Camill. (o) T. Rab. Sanhedrim, fol. 93. 1. (p) In Oniro Critica, apud Mede. (q) Shaare Zion, fol. 102. 2.

state of it; and the rider with a bow and crown, may design Vespasian, whom Christ made use of as an instrument to conquer his enemies the Jews, and who in consequence thereof, had the imperial crown put upon him; and it may be further observed, that though his conquest of them was a very great one, yet they afterwards rose up in the empire, in great numbers, rebelled, and did much mischief, when they were entirely conquered by Trajan and Hadrian, who seem to be intended in the next seal.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

And when he had opened the second seal] Of the sealed book; that is, the Lamb, as before.

I heard the second beast say, Come and see] This living creature was the ox, whose situation was on the west side of the throne, as the standard of Ephraim, on which was an ox, was on the west of the camp of Israel; no mention is made of the noise of thunder, as before, the voice of the ox being lower than that of the lion; and this perhaps may point out a decrease in the Gospel ministry; to fix on any particular person, as with Grotius, the evangelist Matthew, because he says, *Matt. xxiv. 7. nation shall rise against nation*, which carries in it some likeness to what is said at the opening of this seal; or, as with Brightman, Justin Martyr, whose second apology was not regarded by the emperor, is mere conjecture; the ministers of the Gospel are intended who lived under this seal, who, though they might not be strong and courageous like the lion, or their predecessors, yet were like the ox, laborious in preaching, and patient in suffering; and these are represented in this vision as inviting John to behold and observe the following hieroglyphic.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

And there went out another horse that was red] Which may be an emblem either of the suffering state of the church, being answerable to the Smyranean one, as the purity and power of the Gospel, represented in the former seal, may answer to the Ephesine church; or else of those contentions and divisions occasioned among men through the Gospel, which, though of a peaceable nature, yet through the corruption and de-

pravity of men, brings not peace, but a sword; or rather of those bloody wars within the period of time signified by this seal, which came as punishments on the enemies of the Gospel.

And power was given to him that sat thereon] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, who is said to ride on a red horse, *Zech. i. 8.* though indeed he presides over his church and people, and takes the care of them when the most desolating judgments are in the earth, and causes all things to work together for good; nor Satan, the red dragon, who was a murderer from the beginning, and delights in effusion of blood, and in stirring up of men to destroy one another, whenever he is permitted; but Trajan the Roman emperor, in whose reign John died; and who came from the west, and was a Spaniard, as was Hadrian his successor, who may be joined with him; which was the side, or quarter, on which the living creature was that spoke to John; and in the times of these emperors were very bloody and intestine wars: wherefore power is said to be given him,

To take peace from the earth] That is, from the Roman empire, which is sometimes called the whole world; and which could not have been done, if power had not been given from him who makes peace, and creates evil.

And that they should kill one another] Which refers not to the havoc and slaughter which the Jews made one of another at the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the Jews murdering of the Greeks and Romans, and the Romans the Jews, in the times of the above emperors. In Trajan's time, the Jews who dwelt about Cyrene, under the conduct of one Andrew, fell upon the Romans and Greeks, and killed many, fed on their flesh, eat their bowels, besmeared themselves with their blood, and covered themselves with their skins; many of them they sawed asunder, from the crown of the head down to the middle; many of them they threw to the wild beasts, and many of them they forced to fight among themselves, till they had destroyed above two hundred and twenty thousand men; in Egypt and Cyprus they committed the same kind of outrages, their leader being one Artemion, where two hundred and forty thousand men perished (*); Libya was almost emptied of men by them; so that Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, was obliged to send colonies to re-people the places they had made desolate. But at length they were overcome by Lupus, governor of Egypt, and by Marcius Turbo, and by

(*) Dio Cassius in vita Trajani.

by Lucius, whom Trajan sent against them (s), and destroyed great numbers of them; and for the space of about fourteen years, they were quiet; but in Hadrian's time, they rose again, and set one Bar Cochab, a false Messiah, at the head of them, whom they proclaimed king; when Hadrian sent forces against them, and with great difficulty subdued them, took the city Bither, where they were, and destroyed at times five hundred and eighty thousand of them (t); the Jews say, that he put men, women, and children to death in such numbers, that their blood ran down into the main sea, yea, that a horse might go up to his nose in blood (u); they say that he destroyed in Bither double the number of those that came out of Egypt, even twelve hundred thousand men (w); some of their accounts are very extravagant, and exceed all bounds (x); however, the slaughter was very great, that it may well be said,

And there was given unto him a great sword] To slay men with; though Hadrian on his death-bed, amidst his pains, would fain have had a sword given to him, to have dispatched his own life, and could not obtain one (y): the Jews say he destroyed all the land of Judea (z).

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And when he had opened the third seal] Of the sealed book.

I heard the third beast say, Come and see] This living creature was that which was like a man, who was on the south side of the throne, as the standard of Reuben, which had the figure of a man, was on the south side of the camp of Israel; this was not the apostle Paul, as Grotius thinks, to whom was made a prophecy of a famine in the days of Claudius Cesar; nor Tertullian, who made an apology for the christians in the times of this seal, as Brightman conjectures; but the ministers of the Gospel, whose voice was neither the voice of the lion nor of the ox, but of a man, which was still lower, but yet they retained their humanity, reasoning, prudence, and wisdom; and these are represented as calling upon John to come

and see, and take notice of the following hieroglyphic.

And I beheld, and lo a black horse] An emblem either of the afflicted state of the church, still answering to the Smyrnanian one, being black with persecutions, schisms, errors, and heresies, which were many; or particularly of the heresies and heretics of those times, who might be compared to a horse for their pride and ambition, speaking great swelling words of vanity, and to a black one, for their hidden things of dishonesty, and works of darkness, for the darkness in themselves, and which they spread over others; or rather of a famine, not in a spiritual sense, of hearing of the word, but in a literal sense; see Lam. iv. 7, 8. and chap. v. 10. not what was at the siege of Jerusalem, or in the times of Claudius Cesar, Acts xi. 28. but in the times of the emperor Severus, and others, as the historians of those times (a), and the writings of Tertullian shows; when the heathens ascribed the scarcity that was among them to the wickedness of the christians (b); whereas it was a judgment upon them for their persecution of them.

And he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand] By whom is meant not some noted heretic, or heretics, who had balances of deceit in their hands to prove their tenets by, such as spurious writings, &c. or who made pretensions to the scriptures, the balance of the sanctuary, to weigh doctrines in; nor Christ, whose name heretics shrouded themselves under, and professed, and who over-ruled and made use of their heresies for the good of his people, that they might be made manifest. Mr Mede thinks that Septimius Severus, the Roman emperor, who came from Africa, from the south, on which side was the living creature that spoke to John, is intended, and in which country black horses were in great esteem; and he was the only African that ever was emperor of Rome before (c); and the same author thinks, that his having a pair of balances in his hand, expresses the strict justice that emperor was famous for; but rather it signifies famine, and such a scarcity as that bread is delivered out by weight to men; see Lev. xxvi. 26.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

(s) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 3. vi. a Hadrian.

(t) T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1. & Hieros. Taanith, fol. 89. 1. Echa Rabbi, fol. 52. 3.

(u) Juchasin, fol. 142. 2. & 143. 1.

(w) T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. & T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 157. 2. Shirha-shim Rabbi, fol. 13. 1.

& Ariel. Victor. Epitome.

(y) Spartianus in vita Hadriani, & T. Hieros. Pesah, fol. 20. 1.

(a) Dion Cassius in

(b) Spartianus in vita Severi, & Lampadius in vita Alexandri. (c) Apolog. c. 40. & ad Scapulam, c. 2. Chronicon, & Eutrop. Hist. Rom. l. 2.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say] Not the voice of Agabus to the apostle Paul, *Acts* xi. 28. but rather of Christ, who was in the midst of them, chapter v. 6. the Ethiopic version adds, "as the voice of an eagle."

A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny] Chœnix, the measure here used, signifies as much as was sufficient for a man for one day, as a penny was the usual hire of a labourer for a day, *Matt.* xx. 2. so a chœnix of corn was allowed to each man in Xerxes's army for a day, according to Herodotus (*d*); the same quantity for a day was given by the Romans to their shepherds and servants, and is generally said to be about two pounds; according to Agricola it was two pounds and a quarter (*e*). This measure was very different; the Attic chœnix was a measure that held three pounds, the Italic chœnix four pounds, and the military chœnix five pounds, and answers to the Hebrew *Kab* (*f*); and in the Septuagint version of *Ezek.* xlv. 10, 11. it answers to the *Bath*; and some make it to be the fourth part of a bushel, and others half a bushel (*g*); the first account of its being about two pounds, and the allowance of a man for a day, seems best to agree with this place: so that this phrase expresses such a scarcity, as that a man's daily wages would be but just enough to buy himself bread, without any thing to eat with it; and when he would have nothing left for clothes, and other things, nor any thing for his wife and children.

And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine] Signifying that this scarcity should fall not upon the superfluities, such as oil and wine, which may be spared, and men can live without; but upon the necessities of life, particularly bread: some render the words, "and be not unjust in the oil and wine;" and so think they refer to the laws of the Roman emperors, in relation to wine and oil, and to the just execution of them, that there might be plenty of them; and others understand them in an allegorical sense, of the principal doctrines of the Gospel, comparable to oil and wine, and which Christ takes care of, that they shall not be hurt and destroyed by heretics and false teachers, even when they prevail the most, and bring on a famine of the word, and when the church is blackened and darkened with them; and indeed these may much better be applied to the Gospel than, as they are by the Jews, to the law; who frequently say (*b*) that the law is called

oil, and speak of *וַיִּשְׁכַּח* "the wine of the law (*i*)."

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

And when he had opened the fourth seal] Of the seven seals of the sealed book; that is, when the Lamb had opened it, or took it off, as in *ch.* 1.

I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see] This living creature was that which was like an eagle, and was on the north side of the throne, answerable to the standard of Dan, which was on the north of the camp of Israel, and had the figure of an eagle upon it; and the opening of this seal begins with Maximinus the Roman emperor, who came from Thrace, far north. This living creature was not James, the brother of our Lord, who had been dead long ago, as Grotius imagines; nor Cyprian, as Brightman thinks, though he lived under this seal; but the ministers of the Gospel in general in the times referred to are intended: and it may denote some decline in the Gospel ministry, that they had not the courage and strength of the lion, as the first Gospel preachers; nor the patience and laboriousness of the ox, the next set of ministers; nor the solidity and prudence of the man, the ministers that followed them; and yet they retained some degree of light and knowledge, sagacity and penetration, and contempt of the world, signified by the eagle; these invite John in a visionary way to come and see the following hieroglyphic.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

And I looked, and behold a pale horse] An emblem either of the state of the church, pale, not with persecution, as some think, for through that it wasured; but with the hypocrisy and superstition of many of its members, who were paving the way for the man of sin, and on account of whom the church was grown sickly and dying; or rather this is an emblem of the sickly and dying state of the pagan Roman empire, through a complication

(d) Polymnia, c. 127. (e) De Mensuris Gemis, p. 120.

(f) Valerius de Mensuris, l. 1. c. 2. §. 5, 6. & c. 3. §. 6.

& c. 7. §. 6. (g) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dist. l. 2. c. 20.

(h) Talmud Haimon, fol. 89. 3. & 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 104. 1.

& 105. 2. & 137. 2, 3.

(i) Zohar in Exodus, fol. 52. 3. & in Deuter. fol. 117. 1. Rava Mehimna in Zohar in Num. fol. 94. 3. Shirhashirim Rabbah, fol. 5. 3. Midrash Kohleth, fol. 64. 4.

tion of judgments upon it, hereafter mentioned, as war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts.

And his name that sat on him was Death] Not Satan, who has the power of death, but death itself; who is represented as a person, as he elsewhere is, sometimes as a king, *Rom. v. 14.* and as an enemy, *1 Cor. xv. 25.* (see *Isaiah xxviii. 15.* and this was a very ancient way of speaking of death among the heathens; in the theology of the Phœnicians, according to Sanchoniathon (*k*), who wrote before the Trojan wars, a son of Saturn by Rhea was called Muth, whom the Phœnicians sometimes called *Death*, and sometimes *Pluto*; which is manifestly the same with the Hebrew word מוֹת, *Death*: the name of the rider of this horse may well be called death, both with respect to the various kinds of death under this seal, and with respect to the short lives of the emperors; for in less than fifty years time, which is the period of this seal, namely from Maximinus, A. D. 235, or 237, to Dioclesian, A. D. 284, or 286, there were more than twenty emperors, and who most of them were cut off by violent deaths; besides the thirty tyrants who sprung up under one of them, as so many mushrooms, and were soon destroyed. This is the only rider that has a name given him; and from hence we may learn what to call the rest, as the rider of the white horse truth, or Christ, who is truth itself; the rider of the red horse war; and the rider of the black horse famine; and because both the last, with other judgments, meet together under this seal, the rider of this horse is emphatically called *death*.

And hell followed with him] That is, the grave, which attended on death, or followed after him, and was a sort of an undertaker, to bury the dead killed by death; so these two are put together, chapters i. 18. and xx. 13, 14.

And power was given unto them] To death and hell, or the grave, or rather to death only, for the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, *to him*: and the power that was given him reached

Over the fourth part of the earth] Not of the church, which is never called the earth in this book, but is distinguished from it, chap. xii. 16. nor the land of Judea, but the Roman empire; some understand it of Europe, the fourth part of the world.

To kill with the sword] Maximinus, with whom this seal begins, was of a very barbarous disposition, and a more cruel creature, it is said, was not upon earth; and besides his persecution of the christians, he acted a most inhuman part to

the pagan Romans themselves, so that the senate dreaded him; and the women and children at Rome, having heard of his barbarities, deprecated his ever seeing that city; and he was called by the names of the worst of tyrants; more than four thousand men he killed, without any charge or judicial process against them, and yet his blood-thirsty mind was not satisfied (*l*): Gallienus, another emperor after him, emptied many cities entirely of men, and killed three or four thousand a day of his own soldiers, whom he understood had thoughts of a new emperor (*m*); under him thirty tyrants sprung up together in the empire, who made great havoc before they were cut off; and in his time the Alemanni (a people in Germany) having wasted France, broke into Italy; Dacia, which beyond the Danube was added by Trajan (to the Roman empire) was lost; Greece, Macedonia, Pontus, and Asia, were destroyed by the Goths; Pannonia was depopulated by (the people called) Sarmatæ and Quadi; the Germans penetrated into Spain, and took the famous city of Tarracon; the Parthians having seized Mesopotamia, began to claim Syria to themselves; so that as the Roman historian observes (*n*), things were now desperate, and the Roman empire was almost destroyed: not to take notice of the multitudes that were killed in after wars and persecutions, under other emperors during this seal.

And with hunger] Or *famine*; there was a grievous famine in the times of Gallus and Volusianus, which Dionysius bishop of Alexandria makes mention of (*o*); and Cyprian, who lived under this seal, also speaks of famine, and indeed of all these three, war, famine, and pestilence, as then imputed to the christians, and to their irreligion, which charge he removes (*p*).

And with death] That is with the pestilence, which by the Targumist (*q*), and other Jewish writers (*r*), is commonly called מוֹת, *death*, because it sweeps away and carries off such large numbers with it: now in the reign of the last-mentioned emperors was a very noisome pestilence, which raged most cruelly; the Roman historian says (*s*), that their reign is only known, or was famous, for the pestilence, diseases, and sicknesses; Hostilianus, who was created emperor by the senate, died of it (*t*); Dionysius of Alexandria has given a most shocking account of it, who lived at the same time (*u*); it began in Ethiopia,

(*l*) Capitolinus in vita ejus.

(*m*) Pollio in vita Gallieni.

(*n*) Eutropius, l. 9.

(*o*) Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 22.

(*p*) Ad Demetrianum, p. 278.

(*q*) Targum in 1 Chron.

xxi. 12, 14, 17. & in 2 Chron. vi. 28. & xx. 9.

(*r*) T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 29. 1.

(*s*) Eutrop. l. 9. (*t*) Victor. Aurel. de Caesaribus, & Epitome.

(*u*) Apud Euseb. l. 7. c. 21, 22.

(*k*) Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38.

and went through the east, and through all parts of the Roman empire, and lasted fifteen years; to which perhaps, for its large extent and long duration, there never was the like.

And with the beasts of the earth] By which many of the christians were destroyed in the persecutions of those times; and is also one of God's four judgments, and which goes about with the sword, famine, and pestilence, *Exek. xiv. 21.* and may be literally understood of destruction by wild beasts, as Arnobius, who lived at this time observes (*w*); or allegorically, of men comparable to wild beasts, as Herod is called a fox, and Nero a lion; and such savage creatures were most of the Roman emperors, and particularly the thirty tyrants under Gallienus: so the Targum on *Jer. iii. 12.* interprets "the beasts of the field, *חיות הבר*, "the kings of the nations." The Alexandrian copy reads, "and upon the fourth part of "the beasts," as if the power of death reached to them as well as to men. Under this seal all the judgments of God on Rome pagan meet together; and it is observable that Maximinus a Roman emperor, and one of the last of the pagans, boasted, that for worshipping of the gods, and persecuting of the christians, neither pestilence, famine, nor war, were in his times, when on a sudden all these three came together at once (*x*); to which may be added the following observation, that tho' the several steps and methods which God took to punish, weaken, and destroy the Roman pagan empire, were remarkably seen in the distinct periods to which these first four seals belong, yet they must not be entirely restrained and limited to these periods, as if they were not made use of in others; so though the Gospel proceeded with remarkable success under the first seal, in the times of the apostles, to the subduing of multitudes in the Roman empire, it was also preached with great success under the following seals; and tho' there were most grievous wars under the second seal, in the times of Trajan and Adrian, so there were also in after-times; that was not the only period of war, though it was remarkably so; likewise there was a famine in the times of Claudius, under the first seal, *Acts xi. 28.* and in the time of Trajan, under the second seal (*y*), and of Commodus (*z*), as well as under the third; and there were pestilences also in those times, as well as under the fourth seal; and because God did by each of those weaken, break, and at last bring to ruin that empire, they are shewed to John one after another.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal,

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And when he had opened the fifth seal] Of the seven seals of the sealed book; here is no beast speaking here, nor horse and rider presented to view; it was now a very dark time both with respect to the church of God and ministry of the word, and the Roman empire. This seal refers to the times of Dioclesian, and the persecution under him; and instead of the voice of one of the living creatures, John hears the voice of martyrs.

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain] These include not only all the martyrs that were put to death in the persecution of Dioclesian, but all those that suffered in all the persecutions preceding; for this being the last, involves them all. Souls being immaterial and incorporeal, are invisible to the bodily eye; these therefore were either clothed with corporeal forms, as angels sometimes are, or rather John saw them in a visionary way, as he saw the angels: and these were the souls of such as were slain; their bodies were dead, but their souls were alive; which shows the immortality of souls, and that they die not with their bodies, and that they live after them in a separate state: *נשמות קדושות*, the souls of them that are slain, is a phrase used by Jewish writers (*a*), and who have a notion that the souls of those that are slain are kept in certain palaces, under the care of one appointed by God (*b*): and these were seen under the altar; either this is said in allusion to the blood of the sacrifices, which was poured out at the bottom of the altar, *Lev. iv. 7.* and chapter v. 9. in which the life and soul of the creature is; or because that martyrdom is a sacrifice of mens lives, and an offering of them in the cause of God and truth, *Phil. ii. 17.* *2 Tim. iv. 7.* or with some reference to a common notion of the Jews, that the souls of the righteous are treasured up under the throne of glory (*c*); they have also a saying, every one that is buried in the land of Israel is as if he was buried under the altar (*d*); for they think that being buried there expiates their sins (*e*); to which they add, that whoever is buried under the altar, is as if he was buried under the throne of glory (*f*); yea, they talk of an altar above, upon which Michael the high priest causes the souls of the righteous

(a) Tosephta in Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 4. (b) Shaare Ora, fol. 31. 2. (c) T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 152. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 39. 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. Raniel. fol. 39. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 2. & 172. 2. Nisimat Olam, fol. 96. 4. (d) T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 121. 1. (e) Maimon. Hilchet Melacim, c. 5. §. 11. (f) Abot R. Nathan, c. 26.

(w) Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 13. (x) Euseb. l. 9. c. 8. (y) Aurel. Victor. Epitome. (z) Herodian, l. 1. c. 37.

righteous to ascend (g). Christ may be meant by the altar here, as he is in *Heb. xiii. 10.* who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest, and is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and from off which every sacrifice of prayer and praise comes up with acceptance before God; and the souls of the martyrs being under this altar, denotes their being in the presence of Christ, and enjoying communion with him, and being in his hands, into whose hands they commit their souls at death, as Stephen did, and being under his care and protection until the resurrection morn, when they shall be re-united to their bodies which sleep in Jesus: and they were slain

For the word of God] Both for the essential Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose faith they professed; and for the written word, they made the rule of their faith and practice, and which Dioclesian forbid the reading of, and sought utterly to destroy; and for the Gospel principally, which is contained in it.

And for the testimony which they held] The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "for the testimony of the Lamb;" and so the Complutensian edition; either for the Gospel, which is a testimony of the person, office, and grace of Christ, the Lamb, which they embraced, professed, and held fast; or for the witness they bore to him, and the profession which they made thereof, and in which they continued.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And they cried with a loud voice] With great ardour and fervency, being very pressing and importunate; and which shows that they were awake, and not asleep, and that the soul does not sleep with the body in the grave, or is after the death of that in a state of insensibility and inactivity, as some imagine.

Saying, how long, O Lord; holy and true] The person they address is either the Lamb in the midst of the throne, with whom they were, and under the shelter of whom they were safe and happy; or God the Father, who sat upon the throne, whom they call *holy*; because being so in his nature, and as appears in all his works, he could not but hate, and so revenge the evil that was done to them by their cruel persecutors; and whereas he is *true* to all his threatnings, as well as his promises, and faithful to every word of his, they doubted not but he

would judge and avenge them of their enemies; but they seem desirous to know how long it would be first: saying,

Dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?] The men of the world, idolatrous persons, earthly princes, who had shed their blood; and which they desire not out of any sinful or malicious affection, but that the holiness and justice of God might appear, and also his truth and faithfulness in his promises to them, and threatnings to his enemies; and that God in all things might be glorified, and his church and people on earth might be supported and delivered; see *Job xxiv. 12.*

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

And white robes were given unto every one of them] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read in the singular number, "a white robe," and so does the Syriac version; as a token of their innocence, that they did not suffer, or were slain, for any capital crime or immorality they were guilty of; and of their purity and perfection they now enjoyed; as also of that spiritual delight and pleasure, which was unspeakable and full of glory, they now had in the presence of God and Christ; and in short, of that happiness and glory which souls in a separate state, before the resurrection morn, are partakers of; who besides the righteousness of Christ, comparable to fine linen clean and white, walk with Christ in white, in the shining robes of bliss and glory.

And it was said unto them, that they should rest] Or have rest; eternal rest from all their toil and labour, from all their sorrows and sufferings of every kind, which rest remains for the people of God, and into which these were now entered; or that they should cease from expostulating and enquiring after the above manner, and rest satisfied and contented, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and patience, believing, looking, and waiting.

Yet for a little season] Either until the end of this persecution by Dioclesian, when vengeance would be taken of the Roman empire, and it would be no more as pagan; or until the day of judgment, when full vengeance will be inflicted on the persecutors of the saints; and which is but a little while with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of that eternity

eternity of blessedness glorified saints are partakers of.

Until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled] Meaning either the rest of the saints that should suffer martyrdom in the following part of this persecution; or those who should suffer under the Arian persecution, when the empire would become christian; or under Rome papal, and in all the persecutions of the apostacy, unto the end of that state: these are called the *fellow-servants and brethren* of the saints in heaven; for they all worship and serve the same God, and belong to the same family, in heaven and in earth; and the self-same reason that is made use of to animate the saints below to courage, faith, and patience in suffering, 1 Peter v. 9. is used to keep up the expectation of the saints in heaven, of that vengeance that will be executed on their enemies, and to point out the time when it will be; and it may be observed, that the number of martyrs, or of those that shall suffer and die in the cause of Christ, and for his Gospel, is fixed and determined by God; and that number shall be perfected and compleated, and when that is done, he will pour out all his wrath on them that have persecuted them and put them to death: and so the Arabic version renders it, "that the number of their companions and brethren, and of those who are to be killed as they have been killed, is fulfilled;" see 2 Esdras ii. 39—41. Now though this seal does not introduce any judgment to be executed on the Roman empire, as the others do; yet since it introduces all the martyrs with one united voice requiring vengeance on their blood, it may very well be considered as a step towards, and as making way for, the utter ruin of that empire; and which the next seal being opened brings on, and is a full answer to the cry of these souls.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal] Of the sealed book, which the Lamb took out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, in order to open it, and unloose its seal. About this seal interpreters much differ; some refer this to the destruction of Jerusalem, because of the likeness of expressions here used, and in Matt. xxiv. 7, 29. Luke xxi. 25, 26. and chap. xxiii. 29, 30. but this was past many years before this seal was

opened; and besides, though that time was a day of wrath to the uttermost upon the Jewish people, and it was the Lamb's day of wrath, taking vengeance on them for their unbelief and rejection of him as the Messiah; yet they had no sense of the Lamb, nor any apprehension of his wrath at that time, nor have they now, but imputed their calamity to their divisions and quarrels among themselves. Others think this seal belongs to the destruction of the Roman empire by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. but it should be observed, that the empire stood some hundreds of years after the end of the fifth seal and the opening of this; and it was after the seventh seal, and at the sounding of the trumpets, that that destruction came on; moreover, that calamity was by the savageness of some barbarous nations which over-run the empire, but this here spoken of comes from the wrath of the Lamb; add to which, that that calamity distressed the christians in the empire, and them chiefly, whereas this falls only upon the enemies of the Lamb, and the persecutors of his people. Others are of opinion that this has respect to the strange change of affairs in the church of Christ, through the rise, power, and tyranny of antichrist; by the earthquake they suppose is meant the shaking of both church and state by the man of sin; who shook the doctrines, ordinance, and discipline of the church, and threw all into confusion, and introduced a new face of things; and also shook the kingdoms of the earth, and the thrones and crowns of princes: by the sun becoming black, they think is meant the sun of righteousness, Jesus Christ, who was obscured in the doctrines concerning him, as the one and only mediator, and justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, by introducing the mediation of angels and saints, the doctrine of justification by works, and the doctrine of merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, and purgatory: by the moon they understand the church, which receives all its light, grace, righteousness, and holiness from Christ, and which like the moon is changeable as to its outward form and circumstances; and this became as blood through the persecutions, massacres, and cruelties of the Romish antichrist, who has been made drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus: the stars they take to be the ministers of the word; either hypocritical ones, who were like unripe figs, destitute of true grace, and so were easily shaken with the wind of papal power, and fell into the earth, and apostatized from the faith, and conformed to the corruptions of antichrist; or the true ministers of the Gospel, who were put to death,

death, and that to an untimely and violent one, signified by the shaking of untimely figs by a mighty wind: by the *heaven* departing as a scroll rolled up, they suppose is designed either the church, which fled into the wilderness, and remained invisible during the papal power and cruelty; or else the scriptures, which the pope made himself sole judge and interpreter of, and shut up from the common people in an unknown language, and forbid the laity the reading of them: by *mountains* they think are intended the kings and princes of the earth, who were obliged to submit to the Romish antichrist, and give their kingdoms to him, and receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and be his vassals: and by *the islands*, the people their subjects, who were forced to acknowledge him as the supreme head, and receive his mark in their right hand or forehead, or they could not buy and sell: and by all ranks and degrees of men, as *kings*, &c. hiding themselves in rocks and mountains, and calling upon them to fall on them and cover them, they apply either to their invoking the virgin Mary, and other saints, to intercede for them, and screen them from the wrath of God and Christ, on account of their sins; or else to the persecutors of the saints, of every rank and in every age, and to the punishments that shall fall upon them. But however feasible this interpretation may seem to be, it is certain that this was not the face of things at the close of the fifth seal, or the Dioclesian persecution, and at the opening of the sixth, when Constantine came to the imperial throne, for then the church appeared as she is described in *Rev. xii. 1.* which is just the reverse of this. There are others, who because of the very awful things here spoken of, and the very awful language in which they are expressed, conclude that this seal respects the day of judgment; not considering that the fifth seal ends about the year 313, at the close of the last of the ten persecutions, and that the sixth seal begins where that ends; and though above 1400 years have elapsed since that time, yet the day of judgment is not come, and we know not when it will; besides, here is another seal, a seventh seal, which follows, and introduces punishments on the Roman empire, and seven vials follow, which pour out plagues upon antichrist, all which can never be thought to be after the day of judgment; moreover, the account of the day of judgment stands in its proper place in *Rev. xx. 12.* after the destruction of Babylon, the first resurrection, and the saints thousand years reign with Christ. But to proceed; the business of which is the subject of this seal, is the removing of paganism, and pagan go-

vernors out of the Roman empire; this was the thing the rider upon the white horse, under the first seal, set out upon to effect, and never ceased until he had accomplished it; and this is what ensued upon the close of the fifth seal, when pagan persecution ceased, on Constantine a christian emperor having the reins of power in his hands; and it cannot be thought that so wonderful a change of things as this should be omitted in this prophetic history; and it is easy to observe that changes in kingdoms and governments, both as to the polity and religion of them, are sometimes expressed in such like figurative terms as here; see *Isaiah xiii. 9, 10, 13, 17, 19.* and chapter xxxiv. 4, 5. and *Haggai ii. 21, 22.* and which may be accommodated to this event as follows.

And, lo, there was a great earthquake] Or *shaking*, both of the heavens and earth, and which, as it denotes in *Hagg. ii. 6, 7.* compared with *Heb. xii. 26, 27,* the removing of Jewish worship and ordinances, in order to make way for the christian ordinances and institutions, which were to remain; so here it intends the removing of pagan worship and idolatry, and of pagan magistrates, that the christian religion, and christian magistrates might take place. This, with what follows, concerning the darkness of the sun and moon, might be literally true; and it seems by historians, that there were such phenomena about those times; for it is asserted (*b*), that a very great earthquake in Syria followed the Dioclesian persecution, which shook, and caused to fall the tops of houses at Tyre and Sidon, and killed many thousands; and some such like happened at Rome, and at Spoleto, where above three hundred and fifty pagans perished, as they were serving their idols. It is also observed (*i*), that the moon was turned into blood in the times of Galerius, who succeeded Dioclesian; and that the sun failed, and the stars shined for four hours, when Licinius was conquered by Constantine; but then these may be considered as symbols of the change in the empire.

And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair] Which is made of black hairs; see *Isaiah l. 3.* as when eclipsed. The sun was the chief deity worshipped by the heathens, under various names, and this becoming black, may design the removing of their principal gods from their honour and glory, or the downfall of idolatry, which the Jews (*k*) call, *שחיתת עבודת ה' עבודה זרה*, "the sun of idolatry."

(b) *Megdeburg. Centuriator. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 86. & c. 13. p. 837.* (i) *Alsted. Chronolog. Thesaur. p. 59.* (k) *Shirhashim Rabbā, fol. 6. 2.*

"idolatry," which they suppose is meant in *Cant.* i. 6. And Satan, the god of this world, who was worshipped in different forms, now fell, as Lucifer, the son of the morning, and as lightening from heaven, and was cast down from all his dignity, influence, and power to the earth; for the casting out of the red dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, after his combat with Michael, and his angels, in *Rev.* xii. 3, 7—9, refers to this very time; likewise the chief magistrate, the heathen Roman emperor may be included; and it is remarkable, that Dioclesian the emperor, who had now retired from the imperial government, and was under a cloud, under disgrace, and in distress, had, in the zenith of his glory, caused himself to be worshipped as a god, and as the brother of the sun and moon.

And the moon became as blood] As when obscured; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, "the whole moon;" this may design the next heathen deity, or class of deities, for the moon was also worshipped by the heathens, under different names; and may likewise include the pagan priesthood, which was next, and was annexed to the imperial dignity; and which was disused by Constantine, and his successors; and even the title, and the robe, which was a symbol of it, were laid aside as unworthy of christian princes; see Mede upon the place.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth] All the other inferior deities lost their esteem, worship, and honour; for the idol temples being now opened, the idols and statues were exposed to the common people, and were found to be stuffed with hay and straw, which brought them into great contempt (1). Moreover, as stars sometimes signify the ministers of the Gospel in the christian church, chapter i. 20. and sometimes the priests in the Jewish church, *Daniel* viii. 10. so they may here likewise include the idolatrous priests, among the heathens, who were discharged and removed by Constantine, and had their posts and profits taken away from them; yea, Maximinus, an heathen emperor, or tyrant, being beaten by Licinius, who was then Constantine's colleague, killed many of the priests and prophets of his gods, which were formerly

had in great admiration by him, as deceivers and betrayers of him, by whose oracles he was animated to the war (m). And in like manner Licinius put to death the priests and prophets of the new idol at Antioch (n).

Even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind] Which figs being young and green, and not fixed, fall off easily, and in great numbers, when a blustering wind beats upon them; and so the rabble of pagan deities, and idolatrous priests, were easily, and in great numbers, removed through the power of Constantine, which carried all before it.

14 And the heaven departed as a scrawl when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

And the heaven departed as a scrawl when it is rolled together] The manner of writing formerly was on rolls of parchment; hence the word *volume* is used for a book, which, when rolled up, the writing within could not be seen, not a syllable nor letter of it. In like manner the Roman empire, as pagan, which was like a large sheet, or rather like the expanse or firmament of the heaven, stretched out over all the earth, was now, as to the paganism of it, rolled up together, so that there were no more heathen gods, nor heathen priests; no more idolatry, and idolatrous worship of that kind were to be seen, and not so much as the names of heathen gods to be heard of in the empire.

And every mountain and island were moved out of their places] By every mountain may be meant, the places of idolatrous worship, which were usually upon mountains; see *Jer.* iii. 6, 23. which were now shut up, or demolished, or used for christian worship; and every island being moved also may show, that paganism was not only rooted out of the provinces of the empire, upon the continent, but out of the islands also; and the ecclesiastical history of these times informs us, that there were christian churches in the isles, which enjoyed the Gospel free of persecution and distress; as in the isles of Cyprus, Crete, the Cyclades, Sardinia, Sicily, Corsica, and in ours of England, Scotland, and Ireland (o). Mr Daubuz thinks, that as mountains design the temples of idols, islands signify the revenues of them, which were now taken away, and applied to other uses.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great

(1) Sozomen, l. 2. c. 5.]

(m) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 9. c. 20.

(n) Ibid. c. 11.

(o) Centuriator, Magdeburg, cent. 4. c. 2. p. 528.

great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ;

And the kings of the earth, and the great men] The Roman emperors, and other principal magistrates, governors of provinces and cities.

And the rich men] Among the commonalty ; these three may design perhaps more particularly the emperors, nobles, and senate of Rome.

And the chief captains] Or captains of thousands, that had the command of the Roman legions.

And the mighty men] The soldiers, that were under them, men of strength, courage, and valour.

And every bondman, and every free man] Which takes in all the inhabitants of the Roman empire, of every state and condition, and which was an usual distinction among the Romans : these

Hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains] Where, through their cruel persecutions, they had forced multitudes of christians to flee, and therefore, *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation was righteously inflicted on them ; and not to take notice of any other, this was remarkably true of their kings or emperors. Dioclesian and Herclius Maximianus, who were emperors together, in the height of their imperial glory and grandeur, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan, did, on one and the same day, of their own accord, abdicate the empire, and divested themselves of their imperial crown and government, and retired to a private life ; pretending in public, that old age, and the weight of business, were the cause, but to their friends they owned, that it was through despair, because they could not extinguish the christian religion (*p*). Some ascribed this to phrenzy and madness (*q*) ; but the true reason was, that the wrath of the Lamb was let into their consciences, and which they could not bear, and which obliged them to take this step, to the amazement of the whole world. Maximinus, who succeeded them, being overcome by Licinius, laid aside his imperial habit, and hid himself among the common people, and skulked about in fields and villages (*r*). Maxentius, another emperor, fled from Constantine, the instrument of the wrath

of the Lamb, and the pouring it out upon his enemies, and fell into the river Tyber, from the Mylvian bridge, where he perished ; and which was the very place in which he had laid snares for Constantine (*s*).

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb :

And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us] They chose death rather than life. Dioclesian being invited by Constantine to a marriage-feast, excused himself by reason of his old age ; but receiving threatening letters, the historian (*t*) says, in which he was charged with having favoured Maxentius, and with favouring Maximinus, he poisoned himself ; and others of the emperors are said to lay violent hands upon themselves.

And hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb] Thus they owned the proper deity, and almighty power of God, and Christ, which they dreaded ; so Maximinus being afflicted with a most horrible disease, of which he died, asked pardon of the God of the christians, and owned that he suffered justly for his reproaches of Christ. Licinius (*u*), who sometimes pretended to be a christian, and joined with Constantine, but afterwards revolted and fought against him, being conquered and taken, was put to death ; at which time he, and they that suffered death with him, confessed, that the God of Constantine was the only true God (*w*). This passage shews, that Christ, God's first-born, is higher than the kings of the earth ; yea, that he is equal with him that sits upon the throne, with God his Father, since his wrath is equally dreaded, as his ; and that, though he is a Lamb, mild, meek, and gentle, yet there is wrath, fury, and indignation in him, against his enemies, which is very dreadful and intolerable ; see *Psalms* ii. 12.

17 For the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?

For the great day of his wrath is come] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, " of their wrath ; " both of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb, against the heathen gods

(*p*) Centur. Magd. cent. 4. c. 16. p. 909. Vid. Eutrop. l. 9.

(*q*) Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 13. & de Vita Constantini, l. 5. c. 25.

(*r*) Ibid. l. 9. c. 10.

(*s*) Ibid. c. 9. & de Vita Constantini, l. 1. c. 38. Vid. Aurel. Victor. de Cæsaribus.

(*t*) Aurel. Victor. Epitome.

(*u*) Euseb. Hist. l. 9. c. 10. & de Vita Constantini, l. 1. c. 59.

(*w*) Ibid. de Vita Constantini, l. 2. c. 18.

gods and heathen persecutors, in answer to the cry of the martyrs in *ch.* 9, 10.

And who shall be able to stand?] Against either of them, or in their presence, and so as to bear their wrath and displeasure; all which expresses guilt, shame, fear, and despair.

C H A P. VII.

This chapter contains a vision seen at the end of the sixth, and at the opening of the seventh seal, which expresses the security of the saints in all ages following, the praises of angels and men on that account, and the happiness of all the people of God in the millennium state. First, a vision of four angels is seen restraining the winds from blowing on the earth, sea, and trees, *ch.* 1. then of another angel described by the place from whence he came, the east; by what he had, the seal of the living God, and by his cry to the four angels not to hurt the earth, sea, and trees, until the servants of God were sealed; *ch.* 2, 3. and then follows the number of the sealed ones in general, *ch.* 4. and the particular number of them out of each tribe of Israel, *ch.* 5—8. After which is another vision of all the elect of God together, described by the numberless multitude of them; by their descent from all nations; by their position and situation before the throne, and the Lamb; by their habit and attire, and by their loud cry, ascribing salvation to God, and to the Lamb, *ch.* 9, 10. who are joined by all the angels around them, worshipping God, and ascribing glory to him, *ch.* 11, 12. And next is described the happiness of this numerous company, in the thousand years reign, introduced by some discourse which passed between John, and one of the elders, *ch.* 13, 14. who are said to be before the throne, to serve God continually, and to have his presence, *ch.* 15. to be free from every thing troublesome and distressing, *ch.* 16. and to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led by him to fountains of living water, and to have all their tears wiped away from them, *ch.* 17.

AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

And after these things.] After the opening of

fix of the seals of the sealed book, and after the demolition of heathen deities, and of heathen worship, and of heathen magistrates, in the Roman empire, and the representation of these to John, he had the following vision; and which therefore does not refer to the preservation of the christians, before and at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was under the first seal; nor to the security of the saints from the wrath of the Lamb, when it fell upon the pagan worshippers of all ranks and degrees, which was under the sixth seal, and was now over; but rather it respects an intermediate space of time between the sixth and seventh seal, as reaching from Constantine to Theodosius; for upon Constantine's being sole emperor, the church enjoyed great peace and tranquillity after the blustering storms of pagan persecution ceased; and great numbers of God's elect were converted and sealed, and the winds of heathen persecution were held, and blew no more, unless for a short time under the emperor Julian; though the church was not free from the wind of error and heresy, and the storms of contention which arose about them, nor from the tempest of Arian persecutions, which were very grievous; wherefore this refers to what should be between the sixth and seventh seal, which brings on the seven trumpets: and now before John sees that seal opened, a pause is made, and this vision is shewn him, to fortify his mind, and all other saints, that are observers of these things, who by the opening of the following seal would see what judgments and plagues would come upon the empire, now become christian, and what changes and revolutions would be made in it, and might fear that the church of God would be wholly swallowed up and lost; wherefore this vision is exhibited to shew, that notwithstanding the devastations by the Goths and Vandals, and the rise, progress, and power of Mahomet, and the dreadful apostacy of the church of Rome, and all the miseries of it; and the plagues that should come upon the church for it; yet God would have throughout all this, and in every age of time, a sealed number, a true church, hidden and secured, even until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, and time shall be no more, and the mystery of God will be finished.

I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.] Four angels are mentioned, in allusion to the four spirits of the heavens, in *Zech.* vi. 5. and though the earth is not a plain square with angles, but round and globular, yet it is said to have four corners, with respect to the four.

four points of the heavens; and though there is but one wind, which blows sometimes one way, and sometimes another, yet four are named with regard to the above points, east, west, north, and south, from whence it blows. These are commonly called *the four winds of heaven*, Dan. viii. 8. and chap. xi. 4. but here, *of the earth*, as in the Targum on *Isaiab* xi. 12. "and he shall bring near the captivity of Judah, מִקֶּרְבָּהּ רִחוּי אֶרֶץ," "from the four winds of the earth," so in the Targum on *Ezek.* vii. 2. And such things as are chiefly affected with winds, are particularly observed, as the earth, upon which buildings are thrown down by them; and the sea, in which ships are wrecked; and trees, which by the violence of them, are blown down, and torn up by the roots. Some by these angels understand evil angels, who are sometimes called angels, without any additional epithet to distinguish them, and that because a desire of hurting seems to have been in them, as well as a power, x. 2, 3. and who are in every part of the world, seeking to do all the mischief they can; and may be said to hold the winds, not in a literal sense, for God only gathers the wind in his fist, and holds it there, and lets it loose at his pleasure; but in a mystical sense, as these may refer to the word, and the ministers of the word, whose progress and success are often hindered by Satan and his emissaries; and some particularly understand by them the four monarchies of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; others the four emperors, after that Dioclesian and Maximianus had resigned, as Maximinus, Galerius, Maxentius, and Licinius; others Mahomet, or the Turk, in the east, who hindered the Gospel by his wars and devastations, as well as by false worship; the kings of France and Spain on the west, by fire, and faggot, and sword; and the pope in the south, by bulls and excommunications; and the empire and emperors of Germany on the north, by public edicts; or, in general, all the popish tribe, popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, by their decrees, anathemas, sermons, writings, and lying miracles, did all they could that the Gospel might not be preached neither in the earth, on the continent, nor in the sea, or in the islands of it; or that any of the saints, the trees of righteousness, who lived in woods and mountainous places, or were forced to fly into woods, might have any advantage by it. But after all, rather this is to be understood of good angels, and either of their restraining evil angels from doing mischief, see *Dan.* x. 13, 20, 21. *Rev.* xii. 4, 7. or keeping back the winds of false doctrines and heresies from the churches of Christ, in the several parts of the

world; or rather, and which is the true sense, of their holding in the storms of calamities and war to the destruction of kingdoms, provinces, islands, and the several inhabitants of them, and intends a general peace throughout the world; see *Jer.* xlix. 36. and chap. li. 1, 2. This mystical way of speaking seems to agree with the notions of the Jews, who speak of angels standing at the gates of the four winds, מִסְתַּחֲרֵי רִחוּי, "and the keys of the wind in their hands," whose names they give us (x); and make mention of, מַלְאְכֵי רִחוּי, "the angels of the wind (y);" and the Magi among the Persians call the angel of the wind Bad, or Bad-ran (z).

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

And I saw another angel] Not Constantine, who came from the eastern parts to the empire, with the true knowledge of God, and the authority of God to propagate it; and who repressed the four angels, or evil spirits, contention, ambition, heresy, and war, from doing the mischief they otherwise would; and sealed the saints, by giving them a platform of doctrine at the council of Nice, as Brightman and others think. But the uncreated angel, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ; for who but he should have the privy-seal of heaven, who is the angel of the great council, as the Septuagint render *Isaiab* ix. 6. ? and who could speak in such an authoritative manner to the four angels, *saying, Hurt not the earth, &c.* but he who is the head of all principality and power? and who should seal the servants of the Lord, but he who has them in his hands, and keeps them by his power, so that none of them shall perish? And to him agrees all that follows.

Ascending from the east] From Judea, from Zion, from whence Christ, as the salvation, or saviour of Israel, came, *Psal.* xiv. 7. and whose name is *the east*, as some render *Zech.* iii. 8. he is the day spring from on high, the sun of righteousness, who rose from the east, the place of the rising sun, and brought light, life, and joy to his people, when he came to seal them. Compare with this *Ezekiel* xliii. 1, 2, 4. and chapters xlv. 1—4. and xlvii. 1, 2. and xlvii. 1.

Having

(x) Raziell, fol. 36. 1, 2.

(y) Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11.

(z) Hyde, Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 12.

Having the seal of the living God] Having the impress of deity upon him, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image or character of his person; having a testimony, an authentic proof and demonstration of his being the Son of God, of his being the true and living God; as also a commission from God, as mediator, being sealed by him; and having all power and authority from him, to seal and secure the people which were given unto him, and for which purpose he now came: to which may be added, that Christ has the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, without measure, by which the saints are sealed unto the day of redemption; and moreover has likewise the seal of the book of life, or of eternal election in his hands; the elect are chosen in him, and the book of life, in which their names are written to eternal life, is in his keeping, and is therefore called the Lamb's book of life. The Jews speak (a) of the *east* gate of one of the palaces they suppose above, which they say is shut all the six days, and on the sabbath-day is opened; and the governor of this palace has two ministers, one on his right hand, and one on his left, and two seals in their hands, כֶּתֶם חַיִּים, "the seal of life," and the seal of death, and all the books of the world before them; and some are sealed to life, and some to death, with which this passage may be compared. They speak also of an angel that presides at the eastern part of the heavens, who receives the prayers of the Israelites, whose name they call Gazardia (b), as this same angel is said to offer up the prayers of the saints, chapter viii. 3.

And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels] To show his power and authority over them, they being his creatures and ministers; and to express his great concern for his people, his care of them, and affection for them; and to signify the danger they were in through the calamities that were coming on, should they not be sealed.

To whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea] They had a commission from God to let loose the winds, or to bring on wars, devastations, calamities, and plagues, of various sorts, upon the Roman empire, now christian; and on the seat of the beast, not only on the continent, but upon the islands also, even upon all the nations, tongues, and people, subject to the see of Rome.

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor

(a) Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1.

(b) Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 2.

the trees] That is, as yet, for their commission was not contradicted, nor taken away by Christ; and at the time appointed, at the blowing of the several trumpets, they let loose the winds, and let in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, the Saracens and Turks into the empire, and after that poured out the vials of God's wrath upon the Romish antichrist: this retarding of them was but in appearance, that there might be an opportunity to show to John, what care would be taken all along of the church of Christ, and true servants of the living God.

Till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads] The servants of sin, Satan, and the beast of Rome, were took no notice nor care of; they were the persons to be hurt by the winds, signified by the earth, sea, and trees, even idolaters, small and great; but *the servants of our God*, who serve him with grace in their hearts, from a principle of love, in the exercise of faith, without servile fear, and with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and true holiness, and with a view to his glory; and are worshippers of him in spirit and in truth, being followers of the Lamb, whithersoever he goes; and so are the servants of his God, and their God: the sealing of them does not design the sealing of them with the seal of election, this was done in eternity; nor with the seal of the Spirit, which is common to all the saints in all ages; but it denotes the hiding and concealing, and so securing the saints amidst all the calamities of the empire, and throughout the whole time of the Romish apostacy, from first to last; and respects the time when the church fled into the wilderness, and was hid, and nourished with the hidden manna, for a time, and times, and half a time, Rev. xii. 14. Christ set a mark upon them, as was upon the houses of the Israelites, when the destroying angel passed thro' Egypt, and destroyed the first-born in it; and as was upon the foreheads of those that sighed and cried in Jerusalem, when orders were given to slay young and old, Exod. xii. 23. Ezek. ix. 4. Christ will have a people in the worst of times; he knows who are his, and he will take care of them; he has his chambers of protection to hide them in, till the indignation is over-past: the sealers, *we*, are either Father, Son, and Spirit, who are all jointly concerned for the welfare of the elect; or Christ and his ministering angels, that attend him, whom he employs for the good and safety of the heirs of salvation: the seal with which these are sealed, is the seal of the living God, the fore-knowledge, love, care, and power of God; and the name of God, even Christ's Father's name, and their Father's name in their foreheads; the new name of children of God, by and under

which they are known and preserved by him: and this is said to be *in their foreheads*, in allusion to servants, who used to be marked in their foreheads; hence they are called by Apuleius (c) *frontes literati*; and by Martial, a servant, is called *fronte notatus* (d): but then these were such who had committed faults, and this was done by way of punishment (e); wherefore it can hardly be thought that the servants of God should be sealed, in allusion to them: but rather with reference to the mitre on the high priest's forehead, as some think; or it may be to Ezekiel ix. 4. and shows, that though these persons were hid and concealed from men, they were well known to God and Christ; nor were they ashamed to make a public and open confession of Christ before men, as did the true and faithful witnesses of Christ, the Waldenses and Albigenses, in the midst of the greatest darkness of Popery, and of danger from men; and who seem to be chiefly intended.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

And I heard the number of them which were sealed] And therefore could be sure of the exact number, which did not depend upon his sight, and telling them, in which some mistake might have been made, but he heard the number expressed.

And there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand] Which is a square number arising from twelve, the square root of it, being just twelve times twelve thousand; and may denote their being the true and genuine offspring of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, holding their doctrine, and being built on their foundation; see chap. xxi. 14. and these were

Of all the tribes of the children of Israel] Not that these were all Jews in a literal sense, for the time of their conversion, in great numbers, is not yet come. Dr Goodwin thinks, that these sealed ones design the believers of the Greek and Armenian churches, and his reasons are not despicable; but this is to limit and restrain them to a particular part of the church of Christ; whereas they take in all the saints within this long tract of time, even all that are the true Israel of God, who are Jews inwardly, of what nation, kindred, tongue, and people soever; and is a certain and determinate number for an uncertain and indeterminate one; and only intends a large number of persons known to God and Christ; see 2 Esdras ii. 38.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand] Juda is mentioned first, because Christ sprung from that tribe, and the pure worship of God was preserved in it; and that itself was preserved a distinct tribe until the coming of Shiloh; its name signifies, *praise God*, Gen. xxix. 35. and shows, that it becomes all the sealed ones, all true believers, and every member of the church of God, to praise him, for all favours and blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand] Reuben was Jacob's first-born, but by his sin he lost the honour and privilege of birth-right, and therefore is mentioned after Juda, who prevailed above him, and the rest of his brethren; his name signifies *see the Son*, Gen. xxix. 32. and shews, that the Son of God is to be looked unto for righteousness, life, and salvation, by all that expect to be saved, and to him does the true church look for eternal life and happiness.

Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand] His name signifies a *troop*, Gen. xxx. 11. and may denote that there would be a numerous company of saints, and faithful witnesses, during the time of sealing, and amidst all the troubles and afflictions that would attend the church and people of God, and who in the issue would be conquerors, and more than conquerors thro' Christ; see Gen. xlix. 19.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand] *Aser*, which the Septuagint pronounce *Afer*, as here, signifies *blessed*, Gen. xxx. 13. as all the sealed ones are, blessed with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter.

Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand] The name of this tribe signifies *wrestlings*, Gen. xxx. 8. and may design the wrestlings of saints, both with God in prayer, and with their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also their strivings together for the faith of the Gospel.

Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand] This word signifies *forgetting*, Gen. xli. 51. and shows that the followers of Christ should forget the things that are behind, their sinful lusts and

(c) Metamorph. l. 9. p. 130.

(d) Epigr. l. 3. Ep. 20.

(e) Vid. *Popma de Operis Servorum*, p. 170, &c.

and pleasures, the onions and garlic in Egypt, and their former company and acquaintance, their own people, and their father's house, and all their labours and sufferings for the sake of Christ.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand] The name of this tribe signifies *hearing*, Gen. xxix. 33. and such an hearing as is attended with obedience; and denotes the spiritual and practical hearing of the Gospel by those who hear, and understand, and believe, and practice what they hear, and yield the obedience of faith unto it.

Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand] This name signifies *joined*, Gen. xxix. 34. and denotes, that these sealed ones were not only joined one to another in love, and holy fellowship, but to Christ, and were one spirit with him, and were members of his body, flesh, and bones, and cleaved to him with full purpose of heart.

Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand] The interpretation of this name is *hire or reward*, Gen. xxx. 18. and may design those rewards of grace, which God bestows upon his faithful servants, in times of tribulation.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand] Which signifies *dwelling*, Gen. xxx. 20. and was the tribe in which Christ had his dwelling, and where he much conversed; and may denote his gracious inhabitation, as well as that of God the Father, and of the Spirit, among the saints and sealed ones.

Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand] Whose name signifies *adding*, Gen. xxx. 24. and may intend the additions both of numbers, and of gifts and grace to the churches of those times.

Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand] This word signifies *the son of the right hand*, Gen. xxxv. 18. shewing, that these sealed ones are as a signet on God's right hand, and are as near and dear unto him as a man's right hand is to him; see *Psalms* lxxx. 17. Now twelve thousand out of each tribe, make just the number of a hundred forty and four thousand, *Psalm* 4. The tribe of Dan is not mentioned, it may be, because of the apostasy of that tribe, one of Jeroboam's

golden calves being set up there; shewing that God had no sealed ones of that sort, and instead of him Levi is reckoned; though that tribe had no part in the division of the land of Israel, yet had a part in Christ, and is therefore mentioned in this myffical account. Nor is the name of Ephraim used, it may be for the same reason; there having been a great defection in that tribe from the pure worship of God, and instead of him the name of Joseph appears.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

After this I beheld] What follows is a distinct vision from the preceding one, and is not a continuation of that, as if the sealing of the Jewish believers was designed by the former, and the sealing of the Gentiles in this latter; whereas in this vision, there is no mention made of sealing, nor was there, or will there be any need of it in the time it refers unto; and which is not the time of the reformation; nor when the vials began to be poured out upon the seat of the beast; for though there were great numbers converted in many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, yet not in all; nor do the characters of this great multitude, and the happiness they shall enjoy, seem to suit with persons in a state of mortality and imperfection, *Psalm* 14—17. wherefore many interpreters understand this vision of the saints in heaven: but it rather respects the millennium state, or thousand years reign of Christ with his saints on earth, with which all that is here said agrees; compare *Psalm* 14. with chapter xx. 4. and *Psalm* 15. with chapter xxii. 3. and *Psalm* 16, 17. with chapter xxi. 4, 6. And the design of this vision is to show to John, and every diligent observer, that after the seventh seal is opened, the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out; during which time there will be a number sealed, that will profess Christ; and at the close and winding up of all things, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, Christ will descend, and all the saints with him; their bodies will be raised, and the living saints changed, and make one general assembly, who are shown to John here, as in chapter xxi. 9, 10. to relieve his mind; and support his spirits, in a view of the calamities ushered in by the opening of the seventh seal.

And, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number] Which design all the elect of God in the

new Jerusalem church-state, the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; these will appear to be a great multitude, not in comparison of the inhabitants that shall have dwelt upon earth, nor of the professors of religion in one shape or another; for with respect to each of these, they are but a few, a seed, a remnant, a little flock; but as considered in themselves, and so they are many who are ordained to eternal life, whose sins Christ has bore, for whom his blood has been shed, and whom he justifies, and who are called by his grace, and are brought to glory; and who make up such a number as no man can number: God indeed can number them, but not man; for they are a set of particular persons chosen by God, and redeemed by Christ, and who are perfectly and distinctly known by them; their number and names are with them; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and God and Christ can, and do call them by their name; and when they were given to Christ, they passed under the rod of him that telleth them; and he will give an exact account of them, of every individual person, another day. But then they are not to be numbered by men; and they will be

Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues] And therefore must consist both of Jews and Gentiles; these were not *all* nations, &c. but *of all* nations, some of all nations; and such God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit calls; God has not chosen all the Jews, but a remnant, according to the election of grace, nor all the Gentiles, but has taken out of them a people for his name; and so Christ has redeemed, by his blood, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, of Jew and Gentile: and hence the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and to all nations, for the gathering of these persons out of them; and when they are all gathered in, they will all meet together in the new Jerusalem church-state, and make up the body here presented to view.

Stood before the throne, and before the Lamb] The throne of God, and of the Lamb, will be in the midst of the new Jerusalem church; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell among them; and before the presence of his glory will all the saints be presented; and the Lamb will then present to himself his whole church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and they will behold his glory, and see him as he is: and as they are described before by their number, and their descent, so here by their position and situation, and, as follows, by their habit and attire.

Clothed with white robes] Agreeable to their princely and priestly characters: it was usual for princes and noblemen to be arrayed in vestures of linen, as Joseph was in Pharaoh's court; and the Jewish priests wore garments of linen, in their daily ministry and service; and in the thousand years reign the saints will appear to be kings and priests, *Rev. v. 10.* and chapter *xx. 6.* and accordingly will be clothed as such: and this may also be expressive of their entire freedom from sin by the blood of Christ, *1. 14.* and their compleat justification by his righteousness, which is sometimes compared to white raiment, and is called fine linen, clean, and white; and likewise their spotless purity and holiness, sanctification in them being now perfect, which was before imperfect; and these robes may also design their shining robes of glory and immortality; for they will now be clothed upon with their house from heaven, and will have put off mortality and corruption, and have put on immortality and incorruption, and appear with Christ in glory; for such will be the then state of things.

And palms in their hands] Or branches of palm-trees, as in *John xii. 13.* as an emblem of their uprightness and faithfulness, which they had shown in the cause of Christ even unto death, the palm-tree being a very upright tree, *Jer. x. 5. Cant. vii. 7.* or of their bearing up under a variety of pressures and afflictions, by which they were not cast down and destroyed, but bravely stood up under them, and were now come out of them; the palm-tree being of such a nature, as is reported; that the more weight is hung upon it, the higher it rises, and the straighter it grows; see *Psal. xcii. 12.* and chiefly as an emblem of victory and triumph over their enemies, as sin, Satan, the world and death, which they had been struggling with, in a state of imperfection, but were now more than conquerors over them; the palm-tree is well known to be a token of victory. So Philo the Jew (*f*) says, the palm-tree is *συμβολή νίκης*, "a symbol of victory." Conquerors used to carry palm-tree branches in their hands (*g*): those who conquered in the combats and plays among the Greeks, used not only to have crowns of palm-trees given them, but carried branches of it in their hands (*b*); as did also the Romans in their triumphs; yea, they sometimes wore *toga palmata*, a garment with the figures of palm-trees on it, which were interwoven in it (*i*): and hence

(*f*) Allegor. l. 2. p. 74. (*g*) A. Gell. Noctes Attic. l. 3. c. 6. Sueton. in Caio, c. 32. (*b*) Pausan. Arcadica, l. 2. p. 532. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8. & l. 6. c. 19.
(*i*) Isidor. Hispalens. Origin. l. 19. c. 24. p. 168.

hence here palms are mentioned along with white garments; and some have been tempted to render the word thus, "clothed with white robes," and "palms on their sides;" that is, on the sides of their robes (*k*). The medal which was struck by Titus Vespasian at the taking of Jerusalem, had on it a palm-tree, and a captive woman sitting under it, with this inscription on it, *Judaea capta*, "Judea is taken." And when our Lord rode in triumph to Jerusalem, the people met him with branches of palm-trees in their hands, and cried, Hosanna to him. So the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, which they kept in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderness, carried Lulabs, or palm-tree branches in their hands, in token of joy, *Lev. xxiii. 40.* and in like manner, these being come out of the wilderness of the world, and the tabernacle of God being among them, express their joy in this way; see the note on *John xii. 13.*

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

And cried with a loud voice] To shew the strength of their affection, and the greatness of their joy, and how sensible they were of the favour they enjoyed, and how hearty they were in the following ascription of glory to God and the Lamb.

Saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb] By *salvation* is meant, not only temporal salvation, and those many deliverances, which God had wrought for them, and particularly in bringing them out of great tribulation, *1. 14.* but spiritual and eternal salvation, which is the salvation of the soul, and is owing to the free grace of God, and the blood of Christ; and the sense is, that God and the Lamb are the sole authors of it, and the glory of it ought to be given to them, and to no other: God the Father, who sits upon the throne, resolved upon it in his eternal purposes and decrees, and contrived and formed the scheme of it in the council of peace, and he made sufficient provision for it in the covenant of grace; and as he from eternity appointed his Son to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, so in the fulness of time he sent him to be the saviour of the world, and delivered him up for all his people, unto death itself, and spared him not, but awoke the sword of justice against him, and sheathed it in him; and since he had such a concern in salvation, the glory of it in right belongs to him: and the Lamb, the Son of God, he engaged to do the will and work of God, and from everlasting became the surety

of the better testament; and in time he came to seek and to save lost sinners, and he is become the author of eternal salvation to them; his own arm has brought it, and it is in him, and in no other, even a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death, and wrath to come; and it will be the employment of the saints, both in the new Jerusalem church-state, during the thousand years reign, and in heaven to all eternity, to ascribe the glory of all this, not to themselves, to their merits and works of righteousness, or to any creature whatever, but to God and the Lamb only.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

And all the angels stood round about the throne] The holy and elect angels, even all of them, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, the innumerable company of them, who are represented in the same position, chapter v. 11. see the note there.

And about the elders and the four beasts] The churches and ministers; yea, round about the great multitude before mentioned, the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; whose guardians they will be, and to whom they will always be ministering spirits.

And fell before the throne on their faces] In token of submission and reverence.

And worshipped God] By celebrating the perfections of his nature, and ascribing to him the glory of all his works.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Saying, Amen] As approving and confirming what the great multitude of men had said in *1. 10.* in ascribing the glory of salvation to God, and the Lamb: the angels, though they have no part in it themselves, yet highly approve of it as right and just, that men should give the glory of it where it is due.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen] Here a seven-fold praise is given to God by the angels, as to the Lamb, in chap. v. 12. and in words much the same. They rightly ascribe *blessing* to God, who is blessed in himself, and is the source of all blessedness to his creatures, angels and men. And also

glory;

(A) Vid. *L'edict de re Militaire*. l. 6. c. 3. p. 223.

glory; the glory of his divine perfections, who is the God of glory; and of all his works of nature and providence, and especially of the salvation of men by Christ. *And wisdom*; he being the only wise God, whose wisdom is to be seen in all the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and in nothing more than in the scheme of redemption by the Son of God: *and thanksgiving*; for all mercies and favours, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, enjoyed by angels, or by men: *and honour*; which is due to him from all his creatures, as he is the creator of them; and from all his children, as he is their father; and from all his servants, as he is their master: *and power*; which he has exerted, in making all things out of nothing, in supporting the whole universe in its being, and in saving and preserving his own people: *and might*; or *strength*, he being the almighty God, the strength of Israel, and the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and the praise and ascription of all this, the angels wish to be given him by themselves and others, to all eternity; and as desiring that so it might be, and as believing that so it would be, they add their *Amen* to it.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me] This elder was not the apostle Peter, as some popish interpreters have thought; and still less pope Silvester, who lived in the times of Constantine; he is much more likely, according to others, to be Constantine himself, the first of the elders, or the chief magistrate when the church sprung out of its troubles, and enjoyed rest and peace; though some have thought of the prophet Isaiah, since many things, said by this elder, are to be found in his prophecy; compare *Isaiah* i. 14, 16, 17, with *Isaiah* i. 18. and chapters xlix. 10. and xxv. 8. but it is needless to enquire who the particular person was; it is enough to say, that he was one of the four and twenty elders about the throne, one that belonged to the church, perhaps the same as in chap. v. 5. who, in a visionary way, is represented as accosting John upon the above sight. The word *answered* is a common Hebraism of the New Testament, which is often used, when nothing goes before, to which a return is made; and only signifies here, that the elder opened his mouth, began to speak, and called to John, and said as follows:

What are these which are arrayed in white robes?

and whence came they?] This he said, not as being ignorant of them, or of the reason of their being clothed in this manner, nor of the place and state from whence they came, as appears by the account afterwards given of them by him; but to stir up John to take more notice of them, as being a body of men that were worthy of observation and contemplation, and were worth his while to consider well who they were, and from whence they came; and also to try him whether he knew them or no, and to bring him to a confession of his ignorance; and that he might have an opportunity of giving him some hints about them, which might be useful to him, and to the churches, and for the explanation of this vision, and other parts of this prophecy.

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest] John replies in a very humble, modest, and respectful manner, to the elder, calling him *sir*, according to the usage of the Eastern people; and it is observable, that this word is much used in his Gospel, and more than in any other book; see *John* iv. 11, 15, 19, 49. and chapters v. 7. and xii. 21. and xx. 15. Some copies, and the Complutensian edition read, "my Lord;" and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions. John confesses his ignorance, and ascribes knowledge to the elder, and desires information of him; for the sense is, that the elder knew who they were, and from whence they came, but he did not, and therefore desires that he would inform him; and so the Arabic version renders it, "and my Lord, thou art more learned;" that is, than I am, and therefore instruct me, as he accordingly did.

And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation] Seeing this company designs all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be in the world; *the great tribulation*, out of which they came, is not to be restrained to any particular time of trouble, but includes all that has been, is, or shall be; as all the afflictions of the saints under the Old Testament, from righteous Abel to Zechariah; and all the troubles of the people of God in the times of the Maccabees, *Heb.* xi. 35—38. all the persecutions of the christians by the Jews, at the first publication of the Gospel; and the persecutions under the Roman emperors, both Pagan and Arian; and the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, during the whole

whole time of the apostacy; and particularly the last struggle of the beast, which will be the hour of temptation, that will come upon all the world; and in general all the afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and many tribulations of all the saints, and every member of Christ in this world, who in the new Jerusalem church-state will be come out of them; which supposes them to have been in them, and yet were not overwhelmed by them, and lost in them; but by divine support and assistance, waded through them, and were now quite clear of them, and never more to be annoyed with them; see *Rev. xxi. 4.*

And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb] Not in the blood of bulls and goats, which could not take away sin; nor in their own blood, their sufferings for Christ, on which they did not depend, knowing there is no comparison between them, and the glory revealed in them; nor in any works of righteousness done by them, which are imperfect and filthy, and need washing; but in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The robes which they washed in his blood, may either design themselves, their consciences, which this blood purges from dead works; or their outward conversation-garments, which have their spots, and need continual washing; or else the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, or their justification, which is by the blood of Christ, *Rom. v. 9.* The act of washing from sin, by the blood of Christ, is sometimes ascribed to Christ himself, as in *chap. i. 5.* but here to the saints, and designs the concern which faith has in the blood of Christ, which deals with it for justification, peace, and pardon, for the removing of sin from the conscience, and for cleansing from all impurity, both of flesh and spirit; and the effect of this is, that their robes were *made white*; that is, that they were freed from all sin, were without fault before the throne, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This shows, that these persons had no trust in themselves, or dependence on their own merits, and works of righteousness, but wholly trusted to, and depended on the blood and righteousness of Christ; which is the only way to come out of tribulation, and enter the kingdom.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Therefore are they before the throne of God] As in *ψ. 9.* see the note there, not because of their great tribulations, but because they were brought

through them, and out of them, by the grace and power of God; nor because of their robes, or conversation-garments, but because those were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; or because of the blood of the Lamb, and their justification, pardon, and cleansing by it.

And serve him day and night in his temple] Not in any material temple, but in the new Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born, the temple of the living God; for in this state there will be no material temple, or place of worship, but God and the Lamb will be the temple thereof, *chap. xxi. 22.* nor will there be any night there, *chap. xxii. 5.* wherefore this phrase, *day and night*, only denotes the constancy and uninterrupted of their service, there being nothing to obstruct them in it, or break them off from it, as now; in allusion to the priests and levites, who were one, or other of them, night and day, in the service of the temple: and the service of these persons in the new Jerusalem state, will not lie in attending on the word and ordinances, or in the ministrations of them, as in the present state; but in praising God, singing hallelujahs to him, adoring the perfections of his nature, and admiring his wonderful works of providence, and grace, and ascribing the glory of salvation to him, and to the Lamb; and this their service will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence the Ethiopic version renders it, "and they praise him day and night;" this will be the employment of the saints in the millennium state, and to all eternity.

And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them] Or "tabernacle over them;" for the tabernacle of God shall be now among men, and he will dwell among the saints; they shall enjoy his presence, and have the most intimate communion with him; it will appear most manifest, that he is their covenant God, and they are his covenant people; and he will be a tabernacle, not only of inhabitation, but of protection for them; and the name of this city, this new Jerusalem, will be *Jebevah Shammah*, the Lord is there.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more] The words are taken out of *Isaiah xlix. 10.* and will be true in a literal and corporal sense. Now the saints are often in hunger and thirst, then they shall be so no more; and in a mystical and spiritual sense, there will be no famine of the word; for though there will not be the outward ministrations of the word, as now, the substance of it will be enjoyed, to full satisfaction; nor will

will there be any uneasy desires after spiritual things, and much less any hungerings, and thirstings, or lusting after carnal, sensual, and earthly things.

Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat] Not the sun of persecution, see *Matt.* xiii. 6, 22. nor the heat of Satan's temptations, or his fiery darts; nor of any fiery trial, or sore affliction; nor of the divine displeasure, or any fearful sense and apprehension of it; nor of toil and labour, called the burden and heat of the day, from all which they will be now free.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them] See chapter v. 6. not before the throne, as the great multitude are said to be, *x. 9.* nor round about it, as the angels in *x. 11.* but in the midst of it, being equal to him that sits upon it; sitting on the same throne with him, and having the same power and authority, he shall feed them as a shepherd his flock; for this Lamb is a shepherd, and this great multitude are his flock; whom he will feed in this state, not by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as now; but in person, and with the rich discoveries of himself, and of his love, signified by a feast, by new wine in his Father's kingdom, and his own, and by eating and drinking at his table, in the kingdom, appointed by him to his followers; and hence it is they shall never hunger more: or "shall rule them," as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; for the same word signifies to feed, and to rule, as a king rules his subjects: Christ will now be visibly king of saints, and king over all the earth, and will reign before his ancients gloriously; and in these days of his, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely under his power and protection.

And shall lead them unto living fountains of water] By water is meant the grace, love, and free favour of God in Christ, that pure river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine sovereignty; and with which the saints, in this state shall be sweetly and fully solaced and refreshed; and hence they shall never thirst more: and this is said to be living, because not only refreshing and reviving, but because it will last for ever; the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting;

and it is signified by *fountains*, to denote the abundance of it, even as it will be perceived and enjoyed by the saints now; for these waters will not be only up to the ankles, and knees, but a broad river to swim in, which cannot be passed over; and hither will Christ lead his people, which is one branch of his office as a shepherd; and which shews his care of them, and affection for them.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes] Or "or out of their eyes;" as the Alexandrian copy reads; see *Isaiah* xxv. 8. The sense is, that that which is now the occasion of tears, will cease, as the sin and corruptions of God's people, which now are the cause of many tears; as also Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions of this life, and the persecutions of the men of the world; there will be no more of either of these; all will be made to cease; see *Rev.* xxi. 4. and in the room of them full and everlasting joy will take place, *Isaiah* xxxv. 10. Mr Daubuz thinks, that the whole of this chapter belongs to the sixth seal, and that the promises in it are such as were to be accomplished at the opening of the seventh, and do not belong to the millennium state, but had their fulfilment in the times of Constantine, who he supposes is the angel that came from the east, who restrained the persecutors of the church, and introduced a general peace in church and state; and as he came with the seal of the living God, which he understands of the cross of Christ he put upon his standard, and on the shields of his soldiers, so he sealed the servants of God on their foreheads with it, by allowing them to make a public profession of a crucified Christ, and by protecting them in that profession, even men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles: and particularly he thinks the innumerable palm-bearing company may design the council of Nice, gathered by him, which consisted of the representatives of the whole christian church in the several nations of the world, who had great honour, freedom, and immunities conferred upon them; and that the angels are the christian magistrates, submitting to the christian religion, and defending the church, which was now come out of the great tribulation of heathen persecution, and had temples and places of public worship opened for them; in which they had full liberty to serve the Lord continually, without interruption, and were secure from all affliction and persecution, and were filled with joy and gladness; and the Lamb, by the means of Constantine, as Christ's vicar and servant, he declared himself to be, fed and protected the church in peace and quietness; all which

which are accomplished during the rest, or *silence*, under the next seal; and which I should very readily agree to, since this interpretation carries on the thread of the prophetic history without any interruption, were it not for the description of the palm-bearing company, both as to quantity and quality, and the declaration of the happy state of those come out of great tribulation, which I think cannot be made to suit with any imperfect state of the church on earth, without greatly lowering the sense of the expressions used; however, if any one prefers this exposition to what is given, I am not much averse unto it.

CHAP. VIII.

This chapter contains the opening of the seventh seal, and the things that followed on it, and particularly the sounding of the first four trumpets. Upon the opening of the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for half an hour, *ſ. 1.* then follows a vision of seven angels, who stood before God, and had seven trumpets given to them, *ſ. 2.* then of another angel, described by his position, standing at the altar; by his having a golden censer, and by much incense being given him, the end of which was to offer up the prayers of all saints, which with it went up to God, and were acceptable to him; and by filling his censer with the fire of the altar, and casting it to the earth; the effects of which were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake, *ſ. 3—5.* after which the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets, *ſ. 6.* the first blows his, which brings hail and fire, mingled with blood, upon the earth, which burns up the third part of trees and all green grass, *ſ. 7.* the second blows, upon which a burning mountain is cast into the sea, and a third part of it becomes blood, a third part of the creatures in it die, and a third part of the ships upon it are destroyed, *ſ. 8, 9.* the third angel blows, upon which a star, like a burning lamp, falls upon the third part of rivers and fountains, whose name is wormwood, and embitters them, so that many men die of them, *ſ. 10, 11.* the fourth angel blows, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars are smitten, and becomes dark, so that there is no light for a third part of the day and night, *ſ. 12,* and the chapter is concluded with the vision of another angel flying through the midst of heaven, proclaiming three times woe to the inhabitants of the earth, on account of what would be uttered by the three follow-

Vol. V.

ing angels, who were yet to blow their trumpets, *ſ. 13.*

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

And when he had opened the seventh seal] That is, when the Lamb had opened the seventh and last seal of the sealed book.

There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour] Not in the third heaven, the seat of the divine being, of angels and glorified saints, where are hallelujahs without intermission; but in the church, which is oftentimes signified by heaven in this book, and where now the throne of God was placed, in that form as described in chapter iv. or rather in the Roman empire: nor is this silence the sum of this seal, or the only thing in it; for it includes the preparation of the seven angels to take their trumpets, though none of them were sounded during this period. This space of time some think refers to the time which elapsed whilst the angel who had incense given him to offer it with the prayers of saints, did so, and took fire off the altar with his censer, and cast it on the earth; and while the seven angels had their trumpets given them, and they were preparing to sound. Others are of opinion that this was only a pause, a breathing-time for John between the former visions and seals, and the following; nothing being said or done, or any thing exhibited to him during this interval; but he was at leisure to reflect on what he had seen, and to prepare for what was to come. Others understand it of the amazement of the saints at the judgments of God, which were coming upon the christian empire, and of their quiet and silent preparations for these troubles and combats, both within and without, they were to be exercised with; see *Zech. ii. 13.* Others have thought that this refers to the state of the saints after the day of judgment, when there will be an entire cessation from persecution and trouble, and when the souls under the altar will have done crying for vengeance; but this will be not for half an hour only, but to all eternity; nor will angels and saints be then silent. Rather this is to be understood of that peace and rest which the church enjoyed upon Constantine's having defeated all his enemies, when he brought the church into a state of profound tranquillity and ease; and this lasted but for a little while, which is here expressed by about, or almost half an hour, as the Syriac version renders it; for in a short time the Arian heresy broke out, which introduced great troubles in the church, and at last

T t t

last violent persecutions. The allusion is, as in the whole of the following vision of the angel at the altar, to the offering of incense; at which time the people were removed from the temple, from between the porch and altar (*l*), to some more distant place; and the priest was all alone while he offered incense, and then prayed a short prayer that the people might not be affrighted lest he should be dead (*m*); and who in the mean while were praying in a silent manner without; see *Luke* i. 9, 10. hence the Jews say (*n*), that the offering of incense atones for an ill tongue, for it is a thing that is introduced *שמר*, *silently*, and it atones for what is done silently, such as whisperings, backbitings, &c. and they call (*o*) silence the best of spices, even of those of which the sweet incense was made.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

And I saw the seven angels] Not the seven spirits of God, chapters i. 4. and v. 5. their names, as well as their office, differ; nor the ministers of the word, though these are often called angels in this book, and blow the trumpet of the Gospel, and lift up their voice like a trumpet; but the angelic spirits, and these either evil ones, since they are the executioners of wrath and vengeance, and bring judgments on the earth; and who are sometimes said to stand before God, *1 Kings* xxii. 21, 22. *Job* i. 6. or rather good angels, who are sometimes ministers of divine wrath: see *2 Sam.* xxiv. 16, 17. *2 Kings* xix. 35. *seven* of them are mentioned, as being a proper number for the blowing of the seven trumpets, which would compleat all the woes that were to come upon the world, and in allusion to the seven princes the eastern monarchs used to have continually about them, *Ester* i. 14. as it follows.

Which stood before God] And denotes their nearness to him, and familiarity with him, they always behold his face; and their service and ministrations, and their readiness to execute his will, the allusion is to the two priests standing at the table of fat, with two silver trumpets in their hands, with which they blew, and another struck the cymbal, and the Levites sung, which was always done at the time of the daily sacrifice (*p*).

(*l*) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. Maimon. Hilehot. Tamidin, c. 3. §. 3.

(*m*) Misn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1.

(*n*) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. & Zebachim, fol. 28. 2.

(*o*) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1.

c. 7. §. 3.

(*p*) Misn. Tamid.

And to them were given seven trumpets] Every one had one; and which were an emblem of those wars, and desolations, and calamities, which would come upon the empire, and upon the world, at the blowing of each of them; the trumpet being an alarm, preparing for, proclaiming, and introducing these things; *Jer.* iv. 19. *Hos.* v. 8. these are said to be given them; either by him that sat upon the throne, about which they were; or by the Lamb that opened the seal; and shews that they did nothing but what they had a commission and order to do. Here is manifestly an allusion to the priests and Levites blowing their trumpets at the close of the daily sacrifice, and at the offering of incense (*q*), as before observed.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

And another angel came] The Ethiopic version adds, "from the east," as in chap. viii. 2. pointing to the same angel, and who is intended; for not a created angel, as Gabriel, or any other, is meant; nor any mere man, at least not pope Damasus, who lived in Constantine's time, as Lyra thought; nor Constantine himself, which is the opinion of Brightman, who thinks that his, and the desires of other good men to make peace, and compose the differences occasioned by the Arian heresy, are designed by the incense and prayers; and this being brought about at the council of Nice, when the Arian blasphemy was condemned, and truth confirmed, is intended by the ascent of the smoke of the incense with the prayers, out of the angel's hands; when there followed upon this, great contentions, heart-burnings, and persecutions, signified by fire, voices, thunderings, &c. and others have been of opinion that the emperor Theodosius is designed, and that respect is had to his prayer both in the church, and at the head of his army, before the battle with Eugenius, the saints in the mean while putting up united prayers to God for success, and which was obtained; and this victory was attended with a miraculous tempest, and gave a deadly blow to the pagan religion. Yet neither of those, but Christ himself, the angel of the covenant, and of God's presence, is here intended, who appeared

in

(*q*) Maimon. Hilech. Tamidin, c. 6. §. 5.

in an angelic form; so the high priest in the day of atonement was called מַלְאָךְ (*r*), "an angel," or messenger, to which the allusion is.

And stood at the altar] Either of burnt-offerings, and may be rendered "stood upon it;" and so may represent his sacrifice, which had been lately offered up for the sins of his people, he being both altar, sacrifice, and priest; or rather the altar of incense, since mention is made of a censer and of incense, and the smoke of it; and seeing this altar is a golden one, as that was, and is before the throne, as that was before the veil, by the ark of the testimony; *Exod. xxx. 1, 3, 6.* and so Christ is here introduced as the high priest, advocate, and intercessor for his people; though both altars may be respected in this verse: *the altar* may design the altar of burnt-offering, from whence the coals were taken in the censer; and the *golden altar*, the altar of incense, where the coals being brought, the incense was put upon them, and offered; and here he *stood*, as every one concerned in the service of the sanctuary did (*s*).

Having a golden censer] The Ethiopic version adds, "of fire," for this was a vessel in which were put burning coals of fire, taken from off the altar before the Lord, *Lev. xvi. 12.* and which may denote the sufferings of Christ, the pains he endured in his body, the sorrows of his soul, and the wrath of God, which was poured like fire upon him; the altar from which they were taken off, was typical of Christ in his divine nature, which is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and gave virtue to his blood and sacrifice; and all this being before the Lord, may shew that Christ's sufferings were, according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; for these burning coals in the censer were also carried within the vail, representing heaven, where Christ entered by his own blood, and where he is as a Lamb that had been slain, the efficacy of whose death always continues; and this being a golden censer, shews the excellency and perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice and intercession. In the daily service the priest used a silver censer, but on the day of atonement a golden one (*t*); though at the daily sacrifice there was a vessel used, called קַרְנֵי, like to a large golden bushel, in which was a smaller vessel full of incense (*u*), and may be what is here designed.

And there was given unto him much incense] The intercession of Christ is meant by "the incense," which, like that, is sweet and fragrant, very

grateful and acceptable to God, and also pure and holy; for though it is made for transgressors, yet in a way of righteousness, and consistent with the holiness and justice of God; nor is there any like it, nor should there be any besides it; the intercession of angels, and saints departed, ought to be rejected: and it is perpetual, or will be for ever; see *Exodus xxx. 7, 8, 34—38.* and whereas it is said to be *much*, this is in allusion either to the many spices used in the composition of the incense, see *Exodus xxx. 34.* the Jews say (*w*), that eleven sorts of spices were ordered to Moses, and the wise men have added three more, in all fourteen; or to the priest's handfuls of incense, which he took and brought within the veil on the day of atonement, *Lev. xvi. 12.* and which were added to, and were over and above the quantity used every day (*x*); and even in the daily service the pot of incense was not only filled, but *מְרִירָה*, "heaped up (*y*);" now this may denote the fulness of Christ's intercession, which is for all his elect, called and uncalled, greater or lesser believers, and for all things for them, as their cases be; for conversion, discoveries of pardon, preservation, perseverance, and glorification; and to support this, he has a fulness of merit, which makes his intercession efficacious; for incense was put upon the burning coals in the censer, or upon the fire before the Lord, *Lev. xvi. 13.* signifying that Christ's intercession proceeds upon his sufferings and death, his blood and sacrifice, from whence all his pleas and arguments are taken in favour of his people, and which always prevail: and this is said to be *given* him, as his whole work and office as mediator, and every branch of it is; he is appointed to this work, is allowed to do it, and is accepted in it, by him that sits upon the throne: in the daily offering of the incense, one took the incense and *gave* it into the hand of his friend, or the priest that was next him; and if he wanted instruction how to offer it, he taught him, nor might any one offer incense until the president bid him (*z*); to which there seems to be an allusion here: now the end of this was,

That he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne] The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions add, "of God;" the prayers of the saints, rightly performed, are themselves compared to incense, being very grateful and acceptable to God, *Psal. cxli. 2.* and the Arabic version here renders it in connection with the preceding clause, and explanatory

(*r*) Mifn. Yoma, c. 1. §. 5. (*s*) Maimon. Biath. Hamikdash, c. 5. §. 17. (*t*) Yoma, c. 4. §. 4. (*u*) Mifn. Tamid, c. 5. §. 4.

(*w*) Maimon, Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. §. 1, 2. (*x*) Yoma, c. 5. §. 1. & T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1. (*y*) Mifn. Tamid, c. 5. §. 4. (*z*) Mifn. Tamid, c. 6. §. 3. Maimon, Tamid, c. 3. §. 8, 9.

native of that, "and there was given unto him much incense and much spice, which are the prayers of the saints," as in chapter v. 8. and at the time of the incense the people prayed; see *Luke* i. 10. and these are spiritual sacrifices, which Christ the high priest presents for the saints, perfumes with the incense of his mediation, and makes acceptable to God; being offered upon, and coming up from that altar which is before him, and which gives value to every thing that is put upon it: and they are the prayers of saints; who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit of God; who draw nigh to God with a true heart, and call upon him out of a pure heart, and in sincerity and truth; the prayers of such righteous ones, through faith in Christ, avail much with God; and the prayers of all saints are regarded by Christ, and presented by him, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, greater or lesser believers. The Jews often speak of an angel, whose name is Sandalphon, who is appointed over the prayers of the righteous, and takes them and presents them to God (a): so Raphael in *Tobit* xii. 15. says he was one of the seven holy angels that carry up the prayers of the saints; and the heretic Elxai, who was originally a Jew, talked of the holy angels of prayer (b): so the Jews say, that God by, or through his word, receives the prayers of Israel, and has mercy on them (c). In the Greek text it is, "that he should give," &c. that is, the incense, agreeable to the Hebrew phrase in *Numb.* xvi. 47. and elsewhere.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

And the smoke of the incense] For the incense being put, as it was used to be, upon burning coals of fire, caused a smoke to arise like a cloud, *Lev.* xvi. 13. *Ezek.* viii. 11. so that the whole house, or temple, was filled with it (d).

Which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God out of the angel's hand] Alluding to the incense the priest took in his hand, and cast upon the burning coals; and shews how that by the smoke of the incense, or the virtue of Christ's mediation, the imperfections of the prayers of the saints are covered; and how they are by it perfumed and made acceptable to God; and so are

said to ascend up before him, and to be regarded by him, as the prayers of Cornelius were, *Acts* x. 4. now all this is expressive of the wonderful affection of Christ for his church and people, and care of them; that before the angels sound their trumpets, and bring on wars and desolations into the empire, Christ is represented as interceding for them, and presenting their prayers both for deliverance for themselves, and vengeance on their enemies.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

And the angel took the censer] The golden one before-mentioned, the use of which was to take and carry in it burning coals of fire.

And filled it with fire of the altar] Of burnt-offering, for upon that, and not upon the altar of incense, fire was: the allusion is to the priest "that was worthy to use a censer (e); who took a silver censer, and went to the top of the altar (of burnt-offering) and having removed the coals there, and there took them in his censer, and went down and emptied them into a golden one, and there was scattered from it about a kab of coals;" for the golden one held a kab less than the silver one (f).

And cast it into the earth] The Roman empire: by fire some understand the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces, which sat upon the apostles as cloven tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost; and which they suppose were now plentifully bestowed on the ministers of the word, to enlighten them, inspire them with zeal, and abundantly fit them for the work of the ministry, in consequence of Christ's mediation and intercession: and others think the Gospel is intended, which is sometimes compared to fire, *Jer.* xx. 9. and chapter xxiii. 29. or else those contentions and quarrels which, through the corruptions of men, arise on account of the Gospel, *Luke* xii. 49. though rather by fire here are meant the judgments of God, and his wrath and fury poured forth like fire upon the Roman empire, now become christian; and so was an emblem of those calamities coming upon it at the sounding of the trumpets; and shews that as Christ prays and intercedes for his own people, for their comfort and safety,

(a) Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Erod. fol. 99. 1. Shemot Rabba, 6. 21. fol. 106. 2. (b) Epiphan. Contr. Hæres. 1. 1. Hæres. 19. (c) Targum in Hof. xiv. 3. (d) Mifn. Yoma, c. 5. §. 1.

(e) Mifn. Tamid, c. 5. §. 5. c. 4. §. 4.

(f) Vid. Mifn. Yoma,

safety, so he will bring down his judgments upon his and their enemies; see *Ezek. x. 2.* and the Targum on it.

And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake] Which may be understood either of the nature, use, and effects of the Gospel, speaking to the hearts of men by the sons of thunder, enlightening their minds, and shaking their consciences; the like were at the giving of the law, *Exodus xix. 16.* or rather of those terrors, distresses, and commotions in the world, because of God's righteous judgments, and which particularly will be at the sound of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh vial, chapters xi. 15. and xvi. 17, 18. the allusion is to the sounds that were heard at the time of the daily sacrifice: for besides the blowing of the trumpets by the priests, and the singing of the Levites, of which see the note on *ψ. 2.* there was a musical instrument called מִגְרָפָה, "magraphah (g)," which being sounded, a man could not hear another speak in Jerusalem; yea, they say it was heard as far as Jericho.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets] Given them, *ψ. 2.*

Prepared themselves to sound] They stood up, took their trumpets in their hands, and put them to their mouths; this was giving notice of what was coming upon the earth, and a kind of warning to men, and a call upon them to repentance, and to prepare to meet God in the way of his judgments. The time when these trumpets began to blow was after the opening of the seventh seal, and so after the destruction of the empire as pagan, which was under the sixth seal; and after that peace and rest from persecution in Constantine's time, signified by the half hour's silence in heaven; and after the prayers of the saints for vengeance because of their blood shed in the time of Rome pagan, were offered up, heard, taken notice of, and accepted; and therefore cannot regard, nor have any concern with the state of the church before Constantine's time, as some have thought the three first trumpets had; the first introducing the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews, and their persecutions of the christians, and the effusion of their blood by them; the second the ten persecutions under the heathen emperors; and the third, the errors and heresies which pestered the churches of those times: nor

indeed do they concern the state of the church at all; though it seems much more likely that the first four trumpets should bring in, as others have thought, the several heresies of Arius, Macedonius, Pelagius, and Eutyches, which sprung up before the rise of Mahomet, who appears under the fifth trumpet. But all the six trumpets have to do with the empire as christian; for as the six seals are so many steps towards the destruction of the empire as pagan, and the vials bring on the ruin of Rome papal; so the six trumpets are so many gradual advances to the ruin of the empire, now christian: and it must be observed, that the emperor Theodosius, at his death, left the empire divided between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, the eastern part of it, which had Constantinople for its seat, to the former, and the western part of it, which had Rome for its seat, to the latter; now the first four trumpets bring in a barbarous people out of the north, the Goth, Huns, and Vandals, into the western part, who by various incursions and wars, at last utterly destroy it; and the fifth and sixth trumpets bring in the Saracens under Mahomet, and the Turks into the eastern part, who took possession of that, and have kept it unto this day. A preparation being made, the angels begin to sound their trumpets.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The first angel sounded] Or blew his trumpet.

And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood] Somewhat like one of the plagues of Egypt, *Exodus ix. 23—25.* in which was hail mingled with fire, only no blood, but what was caused by its fall on man and beast. Some have thought the Arian heresy is here intended, which may well enough agree with the time; and which may be compared to *hail*, for the mischief it did to the vines, the churches; and because of the violence with which it came, and the chillness of affection to Christ and his people, which it brought on professors of religion; and the barrenness which followed upon it, it making men barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and to *fire*, because of the wrath, contentions, animosities and divisions it occasioned among those who were called christians: and *blood* may be brought into the account, since the like persecutions under Constantius and Valens were

were raised against the orthodox on account of it, as were against the christians under the heathen emperors: and this storm fell upon *the earth*; the whole Roman empire; for even all the world was once said to be Arian, except one Athanasius; and particularly upon the carnal and earthly part of the church, who were seeking places and preferments under the Arian emperors: "and burnt up the third part of trees;" the trees of righteousness, the saints, particularly the doctors of the church, the tall cedars in Lebanon; who either seemed to be such, and were infected with this heresy, and destroyed by it, as many were; or were truly such, and were greatly oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted for not embracing it: and also "all green grass;" the common people, private christians, weak believers, who had the truth of grace in them, and suffered much for not giving into this heresy; or who seemed to have it, but had it not, but withered away, being scorched up and destroyed with this pernicious notion: but rather this trumpet regards not the church, but the empire; and this storm of hail, fire, and blood, designs the irruption of the Goths into it, from the year 395, in which Theodosius died, to the year 408, under Radagaisus their general; with two hundred thousand of them, some say four hundred thousand, he entered and over-run all Italy, but was stopped and defeated by Stilicho; also Alaricus king of the Goths penetrated into Italy, came to Ravenna, and pitched his camp not far from Polentia, to whom the emperor Honorius gave up France and Spain to make him easy, and that he might cease from his ravages and depredations (b); and these irruptions and devastations may be fitly expressed by hail, fire, and blood, just as the coming of the Assyrian monarch into the land of Israel is signified by a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, *Isaiah* xxviii. 2. and it is remarkable, as Mr Daubuz observes, that Claudian the poet (i), who lived at the time of Alarick's war, compares it to hail.

And they were cast upon the earth] The Roman empire, the continent more especially, as Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, which were particularly affected and distressed with these barbarous people.

And the third part of trees were burnt up] By which seem to be meant people of the higher rank, the richer sort of people, who suffered much in these calamities; see *Isaiah* ii. 13. *Zech.* xi. 2. yea, princes, nobles, and rulers, both civil and

ecclesiastical, who suffered much at this time, as Jerom (k), who was then living, testifies; and so trees are interpreted of kings, rulers, and governors, by the Targum on *Isaiah* ii. 13. and *Zech.* xi. 1, 2. *the trees of the field* in *Isaiah* lv. 12. are interpreted of kingdoms (l): the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read before this clause, "and the third part of the earth was burnt;" that is of the Roman empire.

And all green grass was burnt up] The common people, who may be compared to spires of grass for their multitude, being as it were innumerable; and to green grass, for their delightful, comfortable, and flourishing condition before these calamities came upon them; and for their weakness and impotency to withstand such powerful enemies; see *Job* v. 25. *Psalms* lxxii. 16. *Isaiah* xl. 6, 7. and chapter xxxvii. 27. *Numb.* xxii. 4. and these commonly suffer most when a country is over-run and plundered by an enemy.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

And the second angel sounded] His trumpet.

And as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea] By which is meant not the devil, as some think; called a mountain from his height of pride, a great one from his might and power, and a burning one from his great wrath and malice against Christ, his Gospel, and his people; and who may be said to be cast into the sea of this world, and the men of it, whom he instigates against the saints, and who are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest: but rather some heresy, and as some have thought, the Macedonian heresy, which was levelled against the deity of the holy Spirit, as was the Arian heresy against the deity of the Son; the abettors of which looked big, and were supported by power, and shewed great zeal for religion, and pretended to great light and knowledge; and which heresy much affected the sea of pure doctrine, particularly the third part of doctrine, in which the third person, the Spirit of God, is more especially concerned; and was of so pernicious a nature, as to kill many that professed the Gospel, and had a name to live, and destroy many particular churches, comparable to ships: but as before, it is best to understand

(b) Cassiodor. *Chronicon* in Arcad. & Honor. 42. Petav. *Rationar. Temporar.* par. 1. l. 6. c. 10. p. 275. *Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg.* cent. 5. c. 16. p. 371. (i) *De Bello Getico*, v. 174. p. 209. Ed. Barthil.

(k) In *Epitaph. Nepotian.* fol. 9. l.

(l) *Yalkut Simeoni*, par. 2. fol. 50. 1.

stand this of another incursion of the Goths into the Roman empire, and of the effects of it; and it seems to have respect to the taking and sacking of Rome by Alaricus king of the West Goths, in the year 410, or 412 (m). Rome is very fitly represented by a great mountain, as kingdoms and cities sometimes are; see *Zech. iv. 7. Isaiah xlii. 2.* seeing it was built on seven mountains; and its being taken and burnt by Alaricus, is aptly expressed by a burning mountain, as the destruction of Babylon, which is another name for Rome, is by a burnt mountain in *Jer. li. 25.* the sea into which this was cast, may signify the great number of people and nations within its jurisdiction, which suffered, and were thrown into confusion at this time; so distresses and calamities in nations are expressed by a like figure in *Psal. xlii. 2.*

And the third part of the sea became blood] That is, a third part of the jurisdiction of Rome, signified by the sea; see *Jer. li. 36.* was afflicted with wars and blood-shed, by this same sort of people; for whilst these things were done in Italy, a like calamity fell on France and Spain; the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves, having depopulated France, passed over the Pyrænean mountains, and seized on Spain; the Vandals and Sueves on Gallæcia; the Alans on Portugal; and the Silingi, which was another sort of Vandals, invaded Andalusia (n); the Goths under Ataulphus entered France, and the Burgundians seized that part of it next the Rhine (o): see *Exodus vii. 20, 21.*

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea] The fishes; by whom men are meant, the inhabitants of the Roman empire; see *Ezekiel xxix. 4, 5.* where by fish the Targum understands mighty princes and governors.

And had life, died] Were put to death by these savage and barbarous people, who killed all they met with; men, women, and children, young and old, rich and poor, high and low.

And the third part of the ships were destroyed] By which may be designed either the cities and towns within such a part of the Roman jurisdiction,

which were burnt or plundered by them or their goods and effects, which they pillaged, and carried off the wealth and riches of the people, even all their substance, as Austin (p) and Jerom (q), who lived in those times, affirm.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

And the third angel sounded] His trumpet.

And there fell a great star from heaven] Not Mahomet, as some think, for this time is too soon for him, who rose up under the fifth trumpet; nor Arius, for whom it is too late, who lived in the times of Constantine; and still less Origen, who lived before his time; but rather Pelagius, who was a man of great eminence in the church, of much learning, and made great pretensions to religion and holiness, and like a star and lamp, shone forth a while, with great lustre and splendor, but fell into very great errors; denying original sin, and asserting the purity of human nature, crying up the power of man's free will, and asserting that human nature, without the grace of God, was able to keep the whole law, even to perfection; and his name, according to his doctrine, was wormwood and gall, which imbibed the sweet doctrines of the free grace of God, and affected the fountains and rivers, the sacred scriptures, from whence these doctrines flow; so that instead of being pleasant and wholesome to men, through his false glosses and perverse interpretations of them, they became bitter and poisonous; and many souls that received and imbibed his sense of them, died spiritually, and were lost and perished, as all must inevitably, who depend on the strength and works of nature, and deny and despise the grace of God: but it is best, as the other trumpets, so to understand this, of the invasions of the above barbarous people, particularly the Vandals under Genseric, who being turned out of Spain by the Goths, went into Africa, where peace was made, and part of Africa given them to dwell in; after which Genseric through treachery seized upon Carthage, and greatly afflicted Sicily: Theodosius made war against them to no purpose, and peace being made between Valentinian and Genseric, Africa was divided between them; and some

(m) Cassiodor. Chronicon in Honor. & Theodor. 43. Petav. ib. p. 276. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. ib. p. 872. Vid. Hieron. ad Gaudentium, fol. 34. M. (n) Cassiodor. ib. Petav. ib. (o) Cassiodor. Chronicon ib.

(p) De Civitate Dei, l. 1. c. 10. vid. L. Vivem in ib. (q) Ad Eusebium.

some time after Come was spoiled by Genferic of all its riches (*r*): Mr Daubuz thinks Attila king of the Hunns, called "the dread of the world," and "the scourge of God," is meant by this star; who was a rebel against the Romans, and made sad ravages in the empire; at the beginning of which troubles a great comet appeared; and, according to Cassiodorus (*s*), the Huns were auxiliaries to the Romans against the Goths; but Litorius the Roman general was taken; and after this the Huns rebelled, and depopulated Thrace and Illyricum; and Attila their king having slain his brother Bleda, and partner, became sole monarch; and though the Romans under Aetius, by the help of the Goths, beat him in the fields of Catalaun, and obliged him to depart, yet afterwards, having got a reinforcement, he entered with great force into Aquileia, with whom pope Leo made peace.

Burning as it were a lamp] This star resembled that which is called Lampadias, which Pliny says (*t*) imitates, or bears a likeness to burning torches; and he speaks of a spark which fell out of a star, which had such an appearance (*u*): this is expressive of war, and great destruction in the empire.

And it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water] That is, upon the large provinces and chief cities belonging to the Roman empire, and the governors of them, who suffered very bitterly and severely in these times; compare with this Ezek. xxxii. 2, 6. The last clause, *and upon the fountains of waters*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

And the name of the star is called Wormwood] Because of the bitter afflictions, sorrows, and distresses which it was the instrument of; just as Naomi called herself Mara, because the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her, Ruth i. 20.

And the third part of the waters became wormwood] That is, the inhabitants of the provinces and cities belonging to the Roman empire were afflicted with grievous and bitter afflictions and calamities; so great distresses are called worm-

wood, and waters of gall, given to drink Jer. ix. 15. Lam. iii. 19.

And many men died of the waters, because they were bitter] Through the barbarities and cruelties of these savage people, who afflicted the empire: there seems to be an allusion to Exod. xv. 23.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

And the fourth angel sounded] His trumpet. Some think this refers to the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures of Christ, and of two made one mixed nature, neither human nor divine; and brought great darkness upon the doctrine of Christ's person, the sun of righteousness, and into the church, signified by the moon, and among the ministers of the word, the stars. Others are of opinion that that darkness which preceded the rise of the papacy, and introduced it, is here intended.

And the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise] When the doctrine concerning the person and offices of Christ, who is the sun and light of the world, was obscured by heresies; and the discipline of the church, which, like the moon, has all its light, beauty, and order from Christ, was sadly defaced by the introduction of Jewish and paganish rites and ceremonies; and the ministers, the stars, were drawn by the tail of the dragon, and cast to the earth, became corrupt in their principles, and carnal and sensual in their lives; so that it was a time of great darkness and gloominess, night and day: but rather this trumpet has respect to that darkness and ignorance which the above barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and Heruli spread, and left throughout the empire; for from this time there was a visible decline, as of evangelical light and knowledge, so of all kind of useful knowledge, and nothing but ignorance, stupidity, and barbarity took place every where; and which were very afflicting to the man of sin, antichrist, to fix and settle his dominion over the kingdoms which rose up out of the empire at this time; and it also refers to the entire destruction of the western Roman empire, which is expressed by much the same

(*r*) Cassiodor. Chronicon in Theodof. 44. & in Marcian. 45.

(*s*) Chronicon. ib.

(*t*) Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.

(*u*) Ibid. c. 35.

same figures as the ruin of the Roman pagan empire, in chap. vi. 12, 13. and which the various irruptions of these savage people issued in; compare with this *Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.* where the destruction of the Egyptian monarchy is signified in like terms: Jerom, who lived about the time of the first inundation of these nations, in very mournful language expresses the inhumanity and impiety of them, and the ruin they threatened the empire with; and says (*w*), *Romanus orbis ruit*, "the Roman empire is falling." About the year 455, when Rome was taken by Genseric the Vandal, the empire was divided into ten kingdoms; and in the year 476, Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, was obliged to quit his imperial dignity: the Heruli, a people of the same kind with the Goths, and originally Scythians, as they, under their king and leader Odoacer seized on Italy, took Rome, killed Orestes and his brother Paul, and deposed Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, and banished him into Campania; and so the western empire ceased, Odoacer taking upon him the title of king of Italy, and translated the seat of the empire from Rome to Ravenna (*x*); and then might the sun be truly said to be smitten: but still, though Odoacer the Herulian reigned in Italy, the Roman form of government was not altered, the consulship and senate still continued, as they did also under Theodoric the Goth, his successor; but when Italy was recovered by Narses, the emperor Justinian's general, these, with other magistrates, ceased, and Rome became a dukedom, and was subject to an exarch of Ravenna; and then the moon and stars were smitten also. The phrase of *smiting* the sun, moon, and stars, is Jewish; for the Jews express the eclipses of the luminaries in this way; and say (*y*), that when the luminaries לוקין, "are smitten," it is an ill omen; when חממה לוקה, "the sun is smitten," it is an ill sign to the nations of the world; and when לבנה לוקה, "the moon is smitten," it is a bad omen to the enemies of Israel (*z*): and so the phrase "the day shone" "not," is also Jewish; it is said (*a*) of some Rabbins, that they sat and studied in the law, עד דנהיך יומא, "until the day shone;" and when

"the day shone, they rose up and went on their way.

13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven] The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of *an angel*, read *an eagle*; and to *fly* agrees with either of them, and the sense is the same let it be read either way; and this angel may design either Christ, or a created angel, or a minister of the Gospel, as in chapter xiv. 6. did the next trumpet introduce popery, as some have supposed, Gregory bishop of Rome might be thought, as he is by some, to be the angel here intended, since he gave notice and warning of antichrist being at hand.

Saying with a loud voice] That all might hear, and as having something of importance to say, and delivering it with great fervour and affection.

Woe, woe, woe] Three times, answerable to the three trumpets yet to be blown; and which are therefore called the woe trumpets: and these woes are denounced

To the inhabitants of the earth] The Roman empire, particularly the eastern part of it, which the fifth and sixth trumpets relate unto: and even the whole world, with which the seventh trumpet is concerned.

By reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound] The design of this loud cry of the angel is to shew, that though the distresses and ruin which the barbarous nations had brought upon the western empire, were very great; yet those which would come upon the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks, under the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, would be much more grievous; and especially the judgments which the seventh trumpet would bring upon the whole world, when all the nations of the earth will be judged. From the sounding of the fourth trumpet, to the sounding of the fifth, was a space of a hundred and thirty-five years, that is, from the deposition of Augustulus, A. D. 476. to the publick preaching of Mahomet, A. D. 612.

(w) Epitaph. Nepotian, fol. 9. I. tom. 7. vid. etiam Epist. ad Gerontian, fol. 32. E. & Epitaph. Fabio, fol. 68. H.

(x) Vid. Cassiodor. Chronicon in Zenon. 47. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 876. Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. c. 18. p. 304. (y) Jarchi in Gen. i. 14. (z) T. Bab. Succa, fol. 29. 1. Yalkot Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 63. 1.

(a) Zohar in Deut. fol. 123. 3.

CHAP. IX.

This chapter gives an account of the blowing of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and of the effects following upon them. The fifth angel blows his trumpet, and a star falls; the key of the bottomless pit is given to him, which being opened by it, out of it comes smoke to the darkening of the sun and air, and out of the smoke locusts, who have power like scorpions, *ſ. 1—3.* whose power is restrained from using it to the hurt of the grass, or any green thing or tree, only of those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; but are permitted, though not to kill men, yet to torment them five months, which is worse than death unto them, *ſ. 4—6.* The shapes of these locusts, which are said to be like horses, are described by their heads, faces, hair, teeth, breast-plates, wings, and tails, and are said to have a king over them, whose name is mentioned, *ſ. 7—11.* The blowing of this trumpet brings on one of the woes mentioned in the preceding chapter, and the two other follow, *ſ. 12.* The sixth angel blows his trumpet, and a voice is heard from the horns of the altar, directed to the said angel, ordering him to loose four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, where they were prepared, for a determinate time, to slay the third part of men, and they were loosed accordingly, *ſ. 13—15.* The number of the army, under these angels, is given, *ſ. 16.* and the horses and horsemen are described; the riders by their breast-plates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; their horses heads as heads of lions, fire, smoke, and brimstone issuing out of their mouths, by which the third part of men are killed, *ſ. 17, 18.* The reason of this slaughter is, because they had power both in their mouth and tails, which latter were like serpents, and had heads, with which they did mischief, *ſ. 19.* and yet such who were not killed by these plagues, but escaped, did not repent of their idolatry, murders, forceries, fornication, and theft, *ſ. 20, 21.*

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

And the fifth angel sounded] His trumpet.

And I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth] Some take this star to be Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star; and understand by falling, no other than his descending from heaven to earth,

in which sense the word is used in *Gen. xiv. 10.* and that because he is not only said to have the keys of hell and death, chapter i. 18. but particularly the key of the bottomless pit, chap. xx. 1. but then there is a wide difference in the use of the key by the star here, and the angel there, or between the opening of the pit, and letting out smoke and locusts, and the shutting it up, and Satan in it; the one well suits with Christ, the other not: nor is Satan here designed, as others think, who once was a bright star, and shone among the morning stars, but by sin fell from heaven, his first estate; and the fall of this Lucifer, son of the morning, was as lightening from heaven, *Luke x. 18.* But then this was a matter over and past, and what was well known to John; nor did he need a vision to represent this unto him: nor is Arius intended, who lived before any of the trumpets were blown; nor the emperor Valens, who fell from the heavenly doctrine of Christ's divinity, into the Arian heresy, which he encouraged and defended; whereby Christ, the *sun* of righteousness, was obscured, and the *air*, the church enlightened by Christ, was darkened; in whose time the *locusts*, the Goths and Vandals, infected with Arianism, greatly distressed the eastern christians; but his reign was long before the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, which was after the year 600: wherefore by this star is meant antichrist; but whether the western or eastern antichrist, the pope of Rome, or Mahomet, is a question: some interpreters go one way, and some another: Brightman thinks both are intended, seeing they both are antichrist, and rose to the height of their power, much about the same time; and the characters and circumstances in this vision very well agree with them both: what is objected to Mahomet is, that he never was a doctor or teacher in the church, or had any dignity in it, which a star in this book most commonly signifies, and therefore could not be said to fall from it; but this may be observed, that the Arabians, among whom he lived, had received the christian religion before his time; that he himself was conversant with the scriptures, as appears by his wretched perversion of them in his Alkoran; and certain it is, that his accomplices were such as had professed christianity, as Sergius, a Nestorian of Constantinople, and John of Antioch, an Arian, and he himself set up for a prophet: others think the pope of Rome is meant by the star, seeing the bishops of that city had shone out in great light and purity of doctrine and practice formerly, but now about this time most sadly apostatized; they had been indeed gradually declining for some time, but

but now they may be said openly to fall from heaven, when Phocas, who murdered his master, the emperor Mauritius, and took the imperial crown to himself, gave to pope Boniface the third, the title and power of universal bishop, about the year 606, which he and his successors exercised in a most haughty and tyrannical manner.

And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit] Which shews, that this could not be a star in a literal sense, but must design some man, or body of men, and agrees well with the popes of Rome: by the *bottomless pit* is meant hell, out of which the beast arose, and into which Satan will be cast, chapters xi. 7. and xvii. 8. and xx. 3. and by the *key* is designed the power of it, of opening and shutting it, of saving persons from it, or of casting them into it; and which the popes of Rome take to themselves, even all power in heaven, earth and hell, signified by their triple crown; and which they arrogate to such a degree, as to say, that if the pope should send many thousands into hell, no one ought to say, What dost thou? This is a different key from what were given to Peter; he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, his pretended successors have the key of the bottomless pit; his were the keys of knowledge, theirs of ignorance, and of the depths of Satan, let out of this bottomless pit, of which the antichristian religion, both Popish and Mahometan, consist; his were given by Christ, theirs by Phocas a murderer; or they had their power from the dragon, chapter xiii. 2, 4. from Satan himself, according to whose working and influence they come forth, though by divine permission.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

And he opened the bottomless pit] With the key that was given him; he made use of his universal power over all bishops and churches, enacted laws, issued out decrees, made articles of faith, and imposed them on mens consciences, and obliged all to submit to his hellish principles and practices; and this, as it may be applied to Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, may regard the publishing of his Alkoran, and obliging all his followers to receive it as the infallible word of God.

And there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace] The Complutenian edition reads, "of a burning furnace;" and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; which may design false doctrine, and superstitious worship, which sprung

from the decrees of popes and councils, and the Alkoran of Mahomet: and smoke being a dark, thin vapour, and very troublesome to the eyes, and nose, and of a perishing nature, which soon vanishes away, these are fitly expressed by it; for they are the hidden things of darkness, and the authors and abettors of them are such who darken counsel by words without knowledge; they are empty things, have no solidity and substance in them, are comparable to wood, hay, stubble, smoke, and wind; and are very troublesome, and offensive to all enlightened persons, and who have the smell and savour of divine things; and will all perish with the using, being the doctrines and commandments of men, when the true Gospel is an everlasting one. Smoke sometimes designs great afflictions, punishments, and judgments upon men, Gen. xv. 17. *Isaiah* xiv. 31. and here may represent those judgments, both spiritual and temporal, which the antichristian doctrine and worship brought upon the world; and which have been manifest in all ages since.

And the sun and the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit] Christ, the sun of righteousness, was greatly obscured by the Romish antichrist, by his false doctrine and worship, in his offices, merits, and grace, he taking upon him to be head of the church, the infallible interpreter of scripture, and to give out pardons and indulgences; and particularly by the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, &c. as he also was by Mahomet, who represented him only as a mere man, and exalted himself above him as a prophet; and by both were the air, the church, which receives its light from Christ, darkened; or the scriptures, which are the breath of God, are given by inspiration of him, these were most grievously beclouded, and most wretchedly perverted, both by the decrees of popes, and the Alkoran of Mahomet. And it is remarkable what Abulpharagius (b), an Arabic writer, reports, that in the seventeenth year of Heraclius the emperor, which was the year 627, and the fifth of the Hegira, in which year Mahomet began to plunder and make war; for in this year was his plundering excursion into Dumato'l Jundal, and the battle of Bani Lahyan, that half of the body of the sun was darkened; and the darkness remained from Tifrin the first, to the month Haziran, so that very little of its light appeared; which might portend that darkness he was introducing by his wretched religion. And frequently the sun and air have been darkened at noon-day by the locusts, as Pliny (c) relates;

(b) Hist. Dynast. p. 99, 102.

(c) Nat. Hist. l. xi. c. 29.

lates; and of which we have had a late account from Transylvania; see *Exod.* viii. 15.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth] Not literally, for these locusts might not meddle with the grass, nor any green thing, or tree, as locusts do, only men, *ψ.* 4. and had a king over them, *ψ.* 11. which locusts have not, *Prov.* xxx. 27. though the allusion is to such, which spawn and breed in pits, and may be properly said to come out of them; hence in the Hebrew tongue they are called גִּבִּי, from גִּבָּ, a pit, or ditch: nor are devils intended, though they may be compared to locusts for their original, hell, or the bottomless pit; and for their numbers, we read of a legion of them in one man; and for their hurtful and mischievous nature: nor are the Goths and Vandals designed; these, tho' they harassed some parts of the eastern empire, yet chiefly the western; besides, they appeared under the former trumpets: but these are to be understood of the western and eastern locusts, especially the latter. The western locusts are the clergy of the church of Rome, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks and friars, of every order; these were not instituted by Christ, but rose out of the bottomless pit, from the anti-christian smoke of councils, decrees, and traditions; and are fitly compared to locusts, for their number, which have been almost as the sand of the sea, innumerable, and have spread themselves all over the nations of the earth, that have gone by the name of Christendom; and for their devouring nature, living in plenty and idleness, upon the fat of the land, in the best commons, glutting themselves with the spoils of others, devouring widows houses, and impoverishing countries and kingdoms wherever they come. The eastern locusts are the Saracens, and who are chiefly designed; and who were to harass and distress the eastern empire, and prepare for its ruin, which is brought on under the next trumpet, by the Turks. These are fitly signified by locusts, because the locusts generally come out of the eastern parts: it was an east wind which brought the plague of locusts into Egypt, *Exod.* x. 13. and the children of the east, the Arabians, are compared to grasshoppers or locusts, in *Judges* vii. 12. and one of the names of a locust is, אֲרֵבָה, *Arbeh*, not much unlike, in sound, to an Arab. To which may be added, that it is a tradition of the Arabians, that there fell locusts into the hands of Mahomet, on whose backs and wings were

written these words; "we are the army of the most high God; we are the ninety and nine eggs, and if the hundred should be made perfect, we should consume the whole world, and whatever is in it." And it was a law established by Mahomet, ye shall not kill the locusts, for they are the army of the most high God; and the Mahometans fancy, that the locusts were made of the same clay as Adam was: and besides the tradition before mentioned, they say, that as Mahomet sat at table, a locust fell, with these words on its back and wings; "I am God, neither is there any Lord of the locusts besides me, who feed them; and when I please I send them to be food to the people, and when I please I send them to be a scourge unto them;" hence his Saracens may well go by this name. Now these Saracens sprung up in the times of antichristian darkness, both Papal and Mahometan, and may be said to come out of the smoke of the bottomless pit; and the religion of Mahomet, which they embraced, was no other; and like locusts they were innumerable, they went in troops and bands, as locusts do, *Prov.* xxx. 27. pillaging and ravaging all they could; and their sudden and frequent incursions, the desolations and ravages which they made in the eastern empire, are very aptly expressed by the running to and fro of locusts; see *Isaiah* xxxiii. 4. *Joel* ii. 9.

And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power] That is, to torment men, by striking them with their stings in their tails, *ψ.* 5, 10. These are called *scorpions of the earth*, to distinguish them from sea scorpions, which are a kind of fish: so Aristotle (*d*) and Pliny (*e*) speak of terrestrial scorpions, which are the most hurtful; these are of the serpentine kind, have an innocent and harmless look, but are soon angry; have stings in their tails, which they are always striking with, that they may miss no opportunity of doing mischief, and with which they strike in an oblique way (*f*); and which very fitly describes the Saracens, the race of the Ishmaelites, a generation of vipers, a subtle and treacherous sort of people, very furious and wrathful, and who lived by continual robbing and plundering of others, at an unawares: and this may be applied to the western locusts, the monks and friars, who are the seed of the serpent; and who by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple, have a form of godliness, and speak lies in hypocrisy, and lie in wait to deceive; and being provoked, are full of wrath and anger, and strike

(d) Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 26.
(f) Ibid.

(e) Hist. Nat. l. 51. c. 25.

strike very hard with their anathemas and excommunications, and other sorts of punishment, which they have power to inflict.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

And it was commanded them] The locusts, by Christ, who has a sovereign power over all men, and lays them under the restraints of his providence.

That they should not hurt the grass of the earth] True christians, private believers, it may be those of the lower class; who for their numbers, and for their flourishing estate, under the dews of heavenly grace, and the dillations of the doctrine of grace, and the clear shining of the sun of righteousness upon them, and for their weakness may be compared to grass; and yet as these being a company reserved by Christ for himself, who will not break nor bruise them, so neither will he suffer others to hurt them, and resents every offence done to these little ones.

Neither any green thing] Who have the truth of grace in them, are spiritually alive, and in prosperous circumstances, in a fruitful condition, being filled with the fruits of righteousness from Christ, the green fir-tree, and whose leaves of profession continue green; and are themselves, as David says of himself, like a green olive-tree in the house of God, *Psalms* lii. 8.

Neither any tree] Any trees of righteousness, good and righteous men, who are often compared to trees planted by rivers of water, *Psalms* i. 3. *Jer.* xvii. 7. it may be the ministers of the Gospel, men of great grace and gifts, the tall cedars in Lebanon may be intended; and so by these various expressions, christians of every size, from the lowest to the highest class, may be signified. Green things, and leaves of trees, are what the locusts generally destroy, as appears from the plague of them in Egypt, *Exod.* x. 5, 12, 15. and as they did in Syria in the year 1586, as Thuanus reports (g). Now as grass, green things, and trees, are what locusts most desire to feed upon and hurt, so real believers, truly godly persons, are those which both the eastern and western locusts, the Mahometans and Papists, have been very desirous of rooting out and destroying; but Christ takes care of these; these are as the apple of his eye, his jewels, his sheep, his sealed ones;

none shall hurt them, they shall never perish; he knows them that are his, and he will preserve them amidst fire and smoke, amidst all the corruptions and calamities in the world.

But only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads] See chapter vii. 2, 3. the anti-christian party, those of the Romish apostacy, the papists; and these were they that suffered most by the Saracens, who abhorred image-worship, and fell foul on the idolaters of this kind: and, on the other hand, the western locusts, the clergy of the church of Rome, had only influence over the reprobate part of mankind, and only wrought with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, who were given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, but not upon any of the chosen ones, *2 Thess.* ii. 11—13.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

And to them it was given that they should not kill them] As the power of the locusts was limited, with respect to the persons they should hurt, so with regard also to the mischief they should do; for even those whom they were suffered to annoy, they might not kill, that is, utterly root out and destroy, so as that they were no more: and thus, though the Saracens killed great numbers in the eastern empire, by their frequent incursions and ravages, and made large conquests, yet they could never destroy the empire itself, or bring it in subjection to them; nor did they ever take Constantinople, the metropolis and seat of the empire, though they often besieged it. And as for the western locusts, the monks, friars, &c. though they kill the souls, yet not the bodies of men, that are under their power and influence.

But that they should be tormented five months] That is, not that the locusts should be tormented, but men by the locusts; and so the eastern empire was grievously teized and tormented by the Saracens, and many parts of it were conquered, plundered, and pillaged by them, though it was not killed, and put an end to. In the year 628, Mahomet, with his Saracens, having obtained a place in Arabia Felix to dwell in, died in the year 631; from which time his successors, the Saracens, by little and little, subdued Palestine, Syria, and Egypt; and in the year 640, took Persia, putting king Hormisdas to flight; they laid siege to Constantinople seven years, but without suc-

cess;

(g) Hist. sui Temporis, par. 4. l. 84. p. 162. Ed. Francofurt.

cefs; in the year 698, Carthage was taken by them; and in following times many countries on the continent, and many of the islands were grievously infested and distressed by them; though the empire itself did not fall into their hands; it was tormented by them, but not destroyed. And the western locusts have most dreadfully tormented men by their exorbitant dues demanded of them; and by obliging them to confessions, and to attend mass; by enjoining them whippings, fastings, pilgrimages, and penances, and with the terrors of purgatory, and the like. The time that the locusts should torment men, which is *five months*, seems not to design any determinate time; but only that seeing five months is the time that locusts live, and are in their strength and power, even the five hottest months in the year, from April to September (*b*), this seems to denote, that as long as the locusts live, the Saracens in the east, and the monks and friars in the west, so long men should be tormented by them; for it is certain that these have had power to torment men longer time than barely five months; yea, even though these should be understood, according to the prophetic stile used in this book, of five months of years, or an hundred and fifty years; and tho' this should be doubled, seeing they are repeated, *ŷ. 10.* and so make up in all three hundred years; for both the Saracens, and the Romish clergy, have distressed men, either of them, longer time than this: indeed, the flourishing condition of the Saracens was but about three hundred years, or two five months; but their empire or dominion lasted longer, even from the year 622, which was the year of the Hegira, or flight of Mahomet, to the year 1057 (*i*), when the Turkish empire succeeded it; though it is pretty remarkable, that from the year 612, in which Mahomet began to preach publicly, and so let out the smoke with the locusts, to the year 762, in which the city Bagdad was built; when and where the Saracens settled, and made no more excursions of any consequence, were just an hundred and fifty years, or five months of years, as Mr Daubuz observes; and I will not say that this is not intended by this prophecy. Noah's flood prevailed over the earth one hundred and fifty days, or five months, *Gen. vii. 24.*

And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man] Which gives great pain, is very distressing, and their stings are poisonous and mortal: it signifies how troublesome and afflictive those locusts were; to be among them was to live among scorpions, as in *Exek. ii. 6.*

As these locusts are like scorpions, so scorpions have been seen sometimes with wings like locusts; such an one Pausanias (*k*) relates, was brought into Ionia by a Phrygian.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

And in those days shall men seek death] Or desire to die, as Job did.

And shall not find it] Or shall not die.

And shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them] Death will be preferred to a miserable life; it will be chosen rather than life, *Jer. viii. 3.* The ravages of the Saracens, their incursions, and the invasions by them, struck such terror into the inhabitants of divers parts of the empire, that they made death more eligible to them than life.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses] The heads of locusts, especially of some of them, are very much like the heads of horses: and here they are compared to horses,

Prepared unto battle] As they are in *Joel ii. 4.* The horse is a warlike creature, swift, strong, and courageous, *Job xxxix. 21—25.* Locusts sometimes have appeared in the form of armies, and have marched in great order with their leaders before them, and have pitched their camps very regularly; see *Joel ii. 7.* of which we have lately had an account from Transylvania in our public papers. This part of their description may denote the wars of the Saracens, and the rapidity, force, and power with which they over-ran great part of the empire; and as it may be applied to the western locusts, the disputes, contentions, and quarrels raised by the Romish clergy.

And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold] And in this shape some locusts have appeared, to which the allusion seems to be in *Nabum iii. 17.* *thy crowned men are as the locusts.* In the year 1542, it is said (*l*), that locusts came out of Turkish Sarmatia, into Austria, Silësia, and other places, which had on their heads *little crowns*; see *Exek. xxiii. 42.* And the Arabians, as Pliny observes,

(b) Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
par. 3. l. 7. c. 13. & l. 8. c. 13.

(i) Petav. Rationar.

(k) Boetia, five l. 9. p. 573. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25.
& Elian. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 20. & l. 16. c. 41, 42.

(l) Vid. Frentz. Hist. Animal. sacra, p. 5. c. 4. p. 799

go mitrati (*m*), with mitres, turbants like crowns, on their heads. This may design the several victories and conquests which the Saracens obtained in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, and many other places; and supposing this to have any reference to the western locusts, it may respect the triple crown of the head of them, the caps of the cardinals, the mitres of the bishops, and the shaven pates of the priests, in form of crowns.

And their faces were as the faces of men] Which may be expressive of the affable carriage of Mahomet, and his followers, especially to the Christians, and of his great pretensions to holiness and religion, and of the plausible and insinuating ways, and artful methods, used by him, to gain upon men; and being applied to the clergy of the church of Rome, may denote their shew of humanity, and their pretended great concern for the welfare of the souls of men, their flatteries, good words, and fair speeches, with which they deceive the simple and unwary.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

And they had hair as the hair of women] Some locusts have smooth, others hairy heads (*n*): this fitly points at the Arabians or Saracens, who, as Pliny says (*o*), used to wear long hair without cutting it, and attired as women, and have their names also from women: they were called Hagarrenes, from Hagar, Abraham's handmaid, by whom he had Ishmael, the father of these people; afterwards they took the name of Saracens, from Sarah, the wife of Abraham, whose posterity they would be thought to be; though they may have the latter name, either from *pro*, to rob and steal with the Arabians, or from the same word, as it signifies to comb, from the combing and plaiting of their hair. This may also point at the effeminacy of the western locusts, the monks and friars, who dress more like women than men; and many of them claim the virgin Mary for their patroness; and may in general design the votaries of the church of Rome, who are under the vow of a monastic life, as those among the Jews, under a Nazarite's vow, wore long hair.

And their teeth were as the teeth of lions] So in Joel i. 6. which may denote the ravages and devastations of the Saracens in the empire, robbing, pillaging, and destroying all they met with; and is applicable enough to the devouring jaws of the

Romish clergy, their plundering the estates of men, their cruelties and barbarities exercised by their inquisition, &c. Pliny says (*p*), that locusts will know the doors of houses.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron] Alluding to the hard skin of the locust, with which nature has fenced it (*q*); see Joel ii. 8. and denotes the armour with which the Saracens were accoutred: and if to be understood of the western locusts, the hardness of their hearts, their seared consciences, or their protection by the princes of the earth, the many privileges they are possessed of, the laws made in their favour, and for their security; their breast-plates were not breast-plates of righteousness, faith, and love, nor in defence of truth, but against it. And some think the iron colour may denote the colour of their habit, their black garments.

And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle] See Joel ii. 5. The sound of locusts, when they fly or march in large companies, is very great. Pliny says (*r*), they make such a noise with their wings, when they fly, that they have been thought to have been other winged creatures; hence a locust, in Hebrew, is sometimes called, לַחֲלָל, the same name that is given to the high-sounding cymbal. The sound of them is said to have been heard six miles (*s*). Aristotle (*t*) ascribes it to the rubbing of their legs or thighs one against another; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "the sound of their feet:" this may be expressive of the swift and rapid incursions of the Saracens, and of the dreadful alarms to the nations which their invasions made; and may be applied to the noisy declamations, anathemas, excommunications, and interdicts of the Romish clergy.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

And they had tails like unto scorpions] Locusts are said to have the tail of a serpent, and of the vipers of the earth (*u*); see the notes on x. 3, 5.

And there were stings in their tails] Either in the
bafer

(*m*) Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.
fol. 65. 1.

(*o*) Hist. Nat. l. 6. c. 28.

(*n*) Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin.

(*p*) Lib. 11. c. 29.

(*q*) Plin. l. 11. c. 29, 51.

(*r*) Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 9.

(*s*) Scriptores Arab.

(*t*) Claudian. Epig. am. 13.

(*u*) Altiifiodorensis in Joel ii. 5.

Vid. Plin. l. 11. c. 51.

baser sort of them, the Saracens and Papists; or in their doctrines, the prophet being the tail, *Isa.* ix. 15. with which both Mahomet, who set up himself for a prophet, and the Romish clergy, who set up their decrees and unwritten traditions above the word of God, have poisoned and destroyed multitudes of souls.

And their power was to hurt men five months] See the note on *ψ*. 5.

11 And they had a king over them, *which* is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

And they had a king over them] Which natural locusts have not, *Prov.* xxx. 27. by whom is meant the false prophet Mahomet, who was at the head of the Saracens, and led them on to commit the outrages they did; and is believed in by the Turks to this day, as the great prophet of God, and by them preferred to all prophets, not only to Moses, but to Jesus Christ; he is the king of the eastern locusts, as the pope of Rome is the king of the western ones; for the Romish antichrist reigns, or at least has reigned, over the kings of the earth, chapter xvii. 17, 18.

Which is the angel of the bottomless pit] To whom the key of it was given, *ψ*. 1.

Whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon] Both which signify a *destroyer*; and are very applicable both to Mahomet, who by his imposture has been the cause of the destruction of multitudes of souls, as well as by his wars, and those of the Saracens and Turks, of the lives of millions, and of the ruin of many kingdoms, countries, cities and towns. Abulpharagius (*w*), an Arabic writer, relates, that in the times of the Chalif Al-walid, there was one Hejajus, who had caused to be slain, of the chief and illustrious men, an hundred and twenty thousand, besides others of the common people, and that fell in war; moreover, that there died in his prison fifty thousand men, and thirty thousand women: and the same writer reports (*x*), that the famous Abu Moslem put to death six hundred thousand men, who were known, besides those that were unknown, and whom he slew in wars and battles: both these instances are taken notice of by Mr Daubuz, who justly observes, that surely nothing can come near this Abaddon, but the beast, the son of perdition, *2 Theff.* ii. 3. And to him, the pope of Rome,

may the name be truly applied, who has led thousands into perdition, and will go into it himself; and both he, and the false prophet, with the devil, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and will be tormented for ever and ever, *2 Theff.* ii. 4. *Rev.* xvii. 8, 11. and chapter xx. 10. Abaddon, with the Jews, is one of the habitations or apartments of hell (*y*), because it destroys all; Apollyon is the same with Apollo, the god of the heathens, who has his name from destroying (*z*).

12 One woe is past, *and* behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

One woe is past] One of the three woe-trumpets, the first of them; that is, in the vision which John had of it, not the thing itself designed by it.

And behold there come two woes more hereafter] Under the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God,

And the sixth angel sounded] His trumpet.

And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God] The allusion is not to the altar of burnt-offering, which was covered with brass, but to the altar of incense covered with gold; and hence here, and elsewhere, it is called *the golden altar*, and was a figure of the intercession of Christ; for on this altar incense was offered, which was typical of the prayers of the saints offered by Christ, through his mediation: the matter of this altar was shittim-wood, a wood that is incorruptible, and of long duration, denoting the perpetuity of Christ's intercession; and its being covered with gold, expresses the glory and excellency of it; its form was four-square, as is the city of the new Jerusalem, and shews that Christ's intercession avails for all his people in the four parts of the world: and on it were *four horns*, which some think represent the four evangelists, or the Gospel sent into the four parts of the world, and which is the power of God unto salvation; and for the contempt of which, in the eastern empire, the judgments signified under this trumpet came upon it; though rather these may point at the large extent and fulness of Christ's intercession, for all his people,

(y) T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 2. & in Num. fol. 74. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 47. 3. & 93. 4. Raziell, fol. 14. 2. & 35. 2. (z) Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 92: Macrobi. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17.

(w) Hist. Dynast. p. 129. Dyn. 9.

(x) Ibid. p. 140.

people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as his power to protect and defend them, and to scatter and destroy his and their enemies. This altar is said to be *before God*, in a visionary way, as the altar of incense was before the veil, and the mercy-seat, and by the ark of the testimony, *Exod. xxx. 1, 2, 3, 6.* suggesting, that Christ continually appears in the presence of God for all the saints. Now from hence was a *voice heard* by John, and which seems to be the voice of Christ, the advocate and intercessor. In the Greek text it is, "one voice;" not the voice of many angels round about the throne, nor of the souls under the altar, but of the one and only mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ; and this was a voice, not supplicating, but commanding, being addressed to one of his ministering spirits.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet] The sixth trumpet which was given him, and he had prepared himself to sound, and had sounded.

Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates] Not the four angels in chapter vii. 1. they stood upon the four corners of the earth; these were in, or at the river Euphrates; they held the four winds that they should not blow, or restrained the savage nations that they should not hurt; these are bound themselves, that they might not do mischief: nor are angels by nature at all intended; not evil angels, though they are bound in chains of darkness, and are reserved to judgment, they are admitted indeed to rove about in the air and earth, but are under the restraints of the power and providence of God; nor good angels, who are at the divine beck, and go in and out, and are detained and sent forth according to the pleasure of God; and are sometimes employed in killing great numbers of men; see 2 *Sam. xxiv. 15, 16.* 2 *Kings xix. 35.* but men are here meant, as appears from *y. 16, 17.* and particularly the Turks, as most interpreters agree; who dwelt on the other side the river Euphrates, and were let loose, or suffered to pass over that river into the eastern empire, to ruin and destroy it, as they did: these are called angels, because of their might and force, their power and strength, with which they bore all before them; and for their great swiftness and rapidity in the victories and conquests which the Ottoman family obtained; who, from very small

beginnings, raised themselves in a very little time, to a large monarchy, and founded the Turkish empire, which, from them, is to this day called the Ottoman empire. Ottoman the first subdued great part of Bithynia, and fixed the seat of his kingdom at Prusa; or rather his son Urchanes, who conquered Mysia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Caria, and the rest, to the Hellespont, and the Euxine sea. Amurath his son took Callipolis, Hadrianople, and the circumjacent provinces. Bajazet added to the empire Thessalia, Macedonia, Phocis, Attica, Mysia, and Bulgaria; and Mahomet the second took Constantinople itself, and thereby put an end to the eastern empire; and all this was done in a very few years: it is said of this last, that he conquered two empires, and twelve kingdoms; and above two hundred cities (a). And these Ottoman Turks may be called angels, or messengers, because they were the messengers and executioners of God's wrath upon the eastern empire: they are signified by four angels, either, as some think, because of the four names of Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and Arabians, though all Mahometans, under which they went, before they were united under one emperor Ottoman; or rather because of the four principalities, or governments, into which they were divided, while they were upon the banks of, or near to the river Euphrates; the seat of one being at Iconium, another at Bagdad, a third at Aleppo, and a fourth at Damascus; and chiefly because when they passed the river Euphrates, they had four princes at the head of them, Soliman Shak, and his three sons. Soliman himself, as he passed, not knowing the fords of the river, was drowned in it; at which his sons being so affrighted, two of them, Sankur Zengi, and Cun Tugdi, returned to Persia, but the third, Orto-grules, with his three sons (which made four again) Condoz, Sarubani, and Othman, or Ottoman, continued, to whom Aladdin, Sultan of Iconium, gave them some land among the mountains of Armenia (b); and from hence, by degrees, as before observed, a large empire was raised. Now these are said to be bound in the great river Euphrates; which river is to be literally understood, and is the same with that which is so called in *Gen. ii. 14.* and chapter xv. 18. and ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and was the boundary of the Roman empire; so it was fixed by Hadrian (c); and beyond which the Turks, before this time, did rarely go, and if they did, retired again: for till this time, as the

historian

(a) Petav. Ration. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 7.

Supplem. Hist. Dynast. Abulgheraji, p. 41, 42.

Fest. Brev. p. 368. Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 8, p. 502.

(b) Ptolemy.

(c) Rufi

historian says (d), the Turks had Asia *ἐν τῷ Εὐφράτῃ*, "within Euphrates," and the Arabians Cœlosyria and Phœnicia. Now here these were bound; they were not suffered to pass the river, or to make any inroads of any consequence further into the Roman empire; they were restrained, by the decree of God, from proceeding any further till this time; which, as he fixes a decreed place for the sea, that its waves should come thus far, and no further, so he restrains princes from their enterprizes, and settles the bounds of empires, as long as he pleases; and they were kept back by the power of God, from pouring in upon the empire, and pouring forth their fury upon it, who causes the wrath of men to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it; and they were also prevented from coming any further, as yet, through the intestine divisions among themselves, and by the victories of the christians in Palestine.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

And the four angels were loosed] The time being come, fixed by the decrees of God, for making use of the Turks for the destruction of the eastern empire, the restraints of divine providence were taken off from them, and they were suffered to pass the river Euphrates; they were let loose like so many furies, and in a little time overran and destroyed the whole empire, and settled their own, now called the Turkish or Ottoman empire; and which was done about the year 1301.

Which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men] Which may in general denote their readiness, vigilance, and quick dispatch: they lay for a good while hovering over the banks of the river Euphrates, as if they were waiting for an order, or a commission to go over it: they were ready not only at a year's, a month's, a day's, but at an hour's warning, and all of them together; and as soon as ever they had the divine permission, they lost no time; they improved every opportunity, every year, every month, every day, every hour, to settle and enlarge their dominions to the ruin of others; and in a very short time did they accomplish what they desired: though others think this refers to a certain time fixed by God, in which they should be employed in killing men;

and the sense is, that these people were prepared in the purposes and decrees of God, or were appointed for such a length of time here signified, by several dates, in which they should destroy a large multitude of men, by way of punishment for their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornication, and thefts, *χ. 20, 21*. An hour, which is the twenty-fourth of a day or year, in the prophetic stile, is fifteen days, and a day is a year, and a month is thirty years, and a year is three hundred sixty-five years and a quarter, or ninety-one days; in all, three hundred and ninety-six years, and a hundred and six days; which is the precise time between A. D. 1057, when the Turkish empire begun, the empire of the Saracens being entirely demolished by Togrul Beg, or Tangrolipt, and A. D. 1453, in which year Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and an end put to the eastern Roman empire, signified by the third part of men; or else this space of time may be reckoned from the date of Ottoman's reign, May 19, 1301, which, to Sept. 1, 1697, is just this term of time, when prince Eugene obtained a remarkable victory over the Turks, the effect of which was the peace at Carlowitz the next year, since which time the Turks have done but little in Europe: and by this it should seem that their time of killing men here is over, and that their own destruction is hastening on. Mr Daubuz rejects these computations, since a prophetic year consists of 360 days or years, and not 365, as those suppose; and thinks there is no mystery in these dates, and only signify the angels unanimous execution of their commission at once.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

And the number of the army of the horsemen] This shews, that the four angels before mentioned were men, and design generals of armies, or armies of men, even of horsemen; and manifestly point at the Turks, who were not only originally Persians, and had their name, as some say (e), from Turca in Persia, and *تور*, from whence the Persians have their name, signifies an horseman; but the armies of the Turks chiefly consisted of horse, and what for shew and for use, they had generally double the number of horses and mules as of men (f); and they are very good horsemen,

(d) Nicephor, Gregor, Hist. Roman. 1. 2. p. 29.

(e) Leonie Chalcocondylas de reb. Turc. 1. 1. p. 6. (f) Ibid. 1. 7. p. 227. 255.

horsemen, and very dextrous at leaping on and off (g); and the horse's tail is still carried before the general, and principal officers, as an ensign expressive of their military exploits, and shewing where their main strength lies. And the number of this mighty army, it is said,

Were two hundred thousand thousand] Or "two myriads of myriads," two hundred millions, or twenty thousand brigades of ten thousand each; that is, a very large and prodigious number, almost infinite and incredible, like the army of Gog and Magog, as the sand of the sea, chapter xx. 8. The Turks used to bring, and still do bring vast armies into the field: in the year 1396, Bajazet, with three hundred thousand men, fell upon sixty thousand christians, killed twenty thousand of them, and lost sixty thousand of his own: against him afterward, in the year 1397, came Tamerlane the Tartar, with four hundred thousand horse, and six hundred thousand foot, and having killed two hundred thousand Turks, took Bajazet prisoner, and carried him about in a cage in golden chains. In the year 1438, Amurath entered into Pannonia, with three hundred thousand horsemen: and in the year 1453, Mahomet took Constantinople with the like number (h); yea, it is said, that the army at the siege of that city consisted of forty myriads, or four hundred thousand men (i). It is reported, that the great Turk contemptuously sent to the emperor of the Romans a camel, or a dromedary, loaden with wheat, with this vow by a message, that he should bring against him as many fighting men as there were grains of wheat therein (k). And it is related (l), that when Ladislaus, king of Hungary, went out against Amurath with four and twenty thousand horse, Dracula, governor of Walachia, advised him not to attack the emperor of the Turks with so small an army, since he went out every day a hunting with more men than such a number.

And I heard the number of them] Expressed by some angel, and therefore John was certain of it, otherwise he could not have told them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them] In such numbers, and with horsemen on them, and in such order, and in appearance, as follows.

Having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone] Which may be understood either literally of their external breastplates, which being of polished iron, according to the custom of these people, looked at a distance like sparkling fire, and seemed to be of the colour of hyacinth, or of a sky colour, and appeared as flaming sulphur; though some think, that their breastplates were of different colours, some looked like fire, others like jacinth, and others like brimstone; or it may denote that they would be accoutred in scarlet, blue, and yellow, which are the colours the Turks have commonly wore; or this may be understood of their internal breastplates, and the disposition of their minds, having in their breasts nothing but wrath, fury, desolation, and destruction; a fire devoured before them, and behind them a flame burned.

And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions] Gaping and roaring for their prey, or all bloody with it, and looked fierce, and savage; and terrible: this designs not so much the strength, boldness and intrepidity of their horses, which are warlike creatures, and very undaunted in battle, as of the men that sat upon them, who were like David's heroes and warriors, 1 Chronicles xii. 8.

And out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone] Which may be referred either to the horses, or to the horsemen, or both: some interpret this allegorically, and by fire understand either the tyranny of the Turks over their own people, or their fury against others, or their blasphemy against God, and Christ, and his people, being like so many railing Rabshakehs against the God of the christians; and by smoke, the false doctrine of Mahomet, which came out of the same bottomless pit the doctrine of the Romish antichrist did; and is fitly compared to smoke for its disagreeableness, darkness, levity, and duration; see the note on §. 2. and by brimstone the immorality and sad corruption of manners among the Turks, and what is allowed of, or winked at, as fornication, polygamy, sodomy, &c. but rather this is to be taken more literally, and represents the firing of guns on horseback in battle. Guns are a late invention; and the use of them was found out in the age this trumpet refers to; and were much made use of by the Turks in their wars, and particularly great guns or cannons; these were used by Amurath at the sieges

(g) Laonic. Chalcocond. l. a. p. 65. (h) Alsted. Chronol.

p. 321. (i) Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 7. p. 255.

(k) Napier in loc. (l) Bonfinius apud Pareum in loc.

sieges of Belgrade, and of Constantinople (m) and by Mahomet the second at the taking of Constantinople, where a gun or cannon was used of that bigness, as to be drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and two thousand men (n). Gunpowder set on fire, is fitly signified by fire, smoke, and brimstone, which is made of nitre, charcoal, and brimstone; and the firing of guns on horseback, is most aptly described by these coming out of the mouths of horses and horsemen: nor could it well appear to John to be otherwise, who could never have seen a gun, and one fired off in his life; nor could he well represent to others what he saw in vision, than in this manner.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

By these three was the third part of men killed] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "by these three plagues:" as the western Roman empire is in the preceding chapter frequently expressed by the third part of several things, see chapter viii. 7—12. so here the eastern Roman empire, by the third part of men; vast numbers of the inhabitants of which were destroyed by the Turks, through the use of guns, out of which issued fire, smoke, and brimstone; and Constantinople, the metropolis of it, was taken in this way, as before observed, with the taking of which the empire ceased.

By the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths] That is, by the firing of guns.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

For their power is in their mouth] In what proceeded out of their mouth, or seemed to do so; in their guns, and what came out of them.

And in their tails] Which may design their foot-soldiers, which were as the tail to their horse, and who sometimes did great service; or their way of fighting when they fled, by casting up arrows into the air, which would fall upon the heads and horses of those that pursued them;

or their ambushments, by which they destroyed many; or their perfidious violation of treaties; or it may be their tails may intend the doctrine of Mahomet, the false prophet, who is the tail, *Isaiab ix. 15.*

For their tails were like unto serpents] Crooked, crafty, poisonous, and pernicious.

And bad heads] Every tail had a head to it; which may be understood of the officers of the foot-soldiers, or of the priests and teachers of the Mahometan religion.

And with them they do hurt] With their guns, the power in their mouth, they did hurt to the bodies of men; and with their false doctrines, their tails, they did hurt to the souls of men; the Ethiopic version here adds, "five months;" which seem to be taken from *z. 10.*

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues] By whom are meant the western anti-christian party; and such of them as were not plagued, harassed, and destroyed by the Turks, as in Germany, at least some parts of it, France, Spain, Italy, &c.

Yet repented not of the works of their hands] Their idols, their images of saints departed, which their hands had made; the goodness of God in saving them from the depredations of the Turks, should have led them to repentance for their idolatrous worship of images, but it did not.

That they should not worship devils] Or demons, a sort of deities with the heathens, that mediated between the superior gods and men; and here design angels and saints departed, which the papists worship, and use as mediators of intercession for them; and this is no other than worshipping of devils, in God's account, and is downright idolatry, and the doctrine of it is the doctrine of devils.

And idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood] Which are the several materials of which the popish images are made; and what aggravates the stupidity of the worshippers of these images, and of the persons represented by them, is, that these are such

(m) Chalcocond. l. 5. p. 152, 163.

(n) Ibid. l. 8. p. 252.

Which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk] Can neither see their persons, nor hear their prayers, nor stir one foot to their help and assistance; see *Psalms* cxv. 4—7.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their forceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Neither repented they of their murders] Of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the western antichrist is made drunk, and which will be found in her, and for which she is answerable. Now, though the western parts of the empire escaped the scourge of the Turks, yet this did not bring them to repent of their murderous practices, but they went on to take away the lives of godly men; witness the persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses, the murders of John Huss and Jerom of Prague, the burning of the martyrs here in queen Mary's days, and the massacres in Paris and in Ireland, and their butcheries elsewhere; and which they have continued unto this day, where the inquisition obtains.

Nor of their forceries] Jezebel the whore of Rome has been famous for, by which she has deceived all nations; many of the popes of Rome have been necromancers, given to the magic art, and have entered into covenant, and have had familiarity with the devil; and one part of the Romish service lies in exorcisms, conjurations, and enchantments, and which they still continue.

Nor of their fornication] All sorts of uncleanness; not only simple fornication, but adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts, brothel-houses have been set up and licensed by authority, which have yielded to the popes a yearly revenue of forty thousand ducats; the Romish clergy, popes, cardinals, priests, monks, and friars, have been dreadfully guilty of all manner of uncleanness, and still are; whence Rome is called Sodom, chapter xi. 8.

Nor of their thefts.] Who under pretence of granting indulgencies and pardons, and praying souls out of purgatory, with other tricks, cheat men of their money, pillage and plunder their estates, and devour widows houses; rob men of their substance, and make merchandize of their souls: now all these iniquities the papists in the eastern empire were guilty of, for which the Turk as a scourge were let in upon it, and destroyed it; and yet the western papacy, who did not suffer in these calamities, took no warning by them, did not repent of their sins, and reform their practices; but went on, and still go on in the same wicked way, and by their hardness and

impenitence treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.

CHAP. X.

This chapter contains a vision of an angel of a wonderful appearance, the voices of the seven thunders, and an order to John to take the book in the hand of the angel, eat it, and prophesy. The angel is described by his strength, a mighty one; by his descent, from heaven; by his attire, being clothed with a cloud; by a rainbow on his head; by his face being like the sun; by his feet, which were as pillars of fire, the one foot set on the sea, and the other on the earth; by having a little book open in his hand, and by the loud cry he made, like the roaring of a lion, *vs.* 1—3. upon which seven thunders uttered their voices, which John was going to write, but was forbid, *v.* 4. next follows a solemn oath of the angel's; the gesture he used, lifting up his hand to heaven; the person by whom he swore, the living God; what he swore to, that time should be no more, and that the mystery of God would be finished at the beginning of the seventh trumpet, *vs.* 5—7. then several orders are given to John, as to take the open book in the hand of the angel, which he did, to eat it, as he accordingly did; when he found it to be as it was told him it would be, namely, sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; and then to prophesy again before people, nations, tongues, and kings, *vs.* 8—11.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head; and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

And I saw another mighty angel] Not any mere man, as Justin the emperor, as some have thought, who sent letters abroad in favour of the orthodox doctrine, against the Arians, which they suppose is meant by the little book open in his right-hand; and still less the pope of Rome, whether in the sense of Papists or Protestants, which latter represent him as a tyrant, treading upon men both in the islands and in the continent, and holding forth the book of canons and decrees; rather, as Mr Daubuz thinks, Luther, with the rest of the reformers, is intended, and especially since the prophecy of this chapter respects the reformation, which began before the end of the sixth trumpet; and the epithets given to this angel

gel may denote his strength and courage, his divine authority, the protection of him, and the clear doctrine of peace and reconciliation he brought; however, a created angel is not intended; not the angel that made proclamation for the opening of the book, and unsealing it, chapter v. 2. between which, and having the book in his right hand open, is a wide difference; nor any other, though the epithet *mighty* belongs to angels in common; and though this angel swears by the living God; and though it was an angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this book to John; but the uncreated angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, seems rather designed, as appears both by comparing this with *Dan.* xii. 7. and chapter x. 5, 6. and from the power he gave to the two witnesses, chapter xi. 3. which cannot agree with a created angel; and besides, who so proper to hold the book open as he who unloosed the seals, and opened it, and to whom the epithet *mighty* may be applied in the highest sense, as God; and who as man may be said to swear by the living God, and to whom the whole description well agrees? he is sometimes called an angel simply, *Genesis* xlviii. 16. *Exodus* xxiii. 20. *Acts* vii. 35, 38. sometimes the angel of the Lord, and who appears to be Jehovah himself, the second person, *Genesis* xvi. 7, 10. and chapter xviii. 1, 2. compared with chapters xix. 1. and xxii. 11, 12. and sometimes the angel of God's presence, *Isaiah* lxiii. 9. and the angel of the great council in the Septuagint on *Isaiah* ix. 6. and the angel, or messenger, of the covenant, *Mal.* iii. 1. and may be so called because he is a messenger from God as man and mediator, being sent by him to declare his will and redeem his people; and he is a *mighty* one; not only as God, being the mighty God, the Almighty, which appears by his creation of all things, and upholding them in their beings; but as mediator, having all power in heaven and in earth, and being far above all principality, power, and might; and as man, made strong by God for himself, and for his people: he appears now as *another* angel, distinct from the seven angels who had trumpets given them to sound, and six of which had already sounded; and particularly from the angel of the sixth trumpet, who had just sounded; though some copies, and the Complutensian edition, leave out the word *another*; and very opportunely does he appear for the comfort of his church, when the trumpets that had been blown had brought such desolations upon the empire, western and eastern, and when both the western and eastern antichrists had appeared, and before the seventh trumpet sounds, and brings in the last and greatest woe: and he is said to

Come down from heaven] Which does not design his incarnation, that was long before this time; nor his spiritual presence with his people, which is common to them in all ages; nor his second coming to judgment, which will be by a descent from heaven, and in the clouds of heaven, for that is yet future; but in a visionary way, his appearance to and for his church and people in the dark times of antichrist, when afflicted by the Turk on the one hand, and the Pope on the other.

Clothed with a cloud (n)] Which is expressive not of the human nature of Christ, with which his divinity was veiled in his state of humiliation, so that few saw the glory of his divine person, and the greater part esteemed him a mere man; but rather of the obscurity of him, his person, offices, and grace, in those times of antichristian darkness, and even of the light and knowledge which his true and faithful followers had of him in those times; it was a dark and cloudy day with them, as well as the whole earth was covered with the gross darkness of Popery and Mahometanism; though it seems best of all to interpret this phrase of the majestic presence of Christ in his appearances to his people, who went before the people of Israel in a cloud by day in the wilderness, descended in one on mount Sinai, dwelt in one both in the tabernacle and temple, was overshadowed by one on the mount when transfigured, ascended in one to heaven, and will return in one, or more: moreover, the cloud may denote the power and protection of God attending the reformation; see *Psalms* lxviii. 34. *Isaiah* iv. 5.

And a rainbow was upon his head] Which was a token of the covenant; see chapter iv. 3. and the note there: this, with its blessings, is upon the head of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, and who is the head of his church and people; and Christ appearing in this form at this time, when the world was overflowed with Popery and Mahometanism, shews that God was still mindful of his covenant, even in those worst of times, and would not suffer his church to be overwhelmed, and sunk in the general deluge of antichristianism, or the gates of hell to prevail against it; Christ at such a time as this, very seasonably appears with the rainbow of the covenant on his head, as a messenger of peace, and bringer of good tidings, to let his people know that ere long it would be halcyon days with them, and there would be times of refreshing from

(n) Εὐαγγελισμὸς τῆ νύκτι, Philo de vita Moysi, l. 1. p. 628.

from the presence of the Lord, who was ever mindful of his covenant with them; and that the Gospel of peace and reconciliation would be preached unto them.

And his face was as it were the sun] Or looked like the sun, as it did at the time of his transfiguration on the mount, and as he is described in chapter i. 16. and may denote the clearness and purity of Christ; both as God, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and as man, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled; and is also expressive of that light of nature, grace, and glory, which he imparts unto the sons of men; as well as of that beauty, loveliness, and amiableness in his person, which renders him as the sun, delightful to behold, and of the majesty of his person, and the manifestations of himself, to the great comfort, pleasure, and refreshment of his saints.

And his feet as pillars of fire] Which may refer to the state of the church of Christ at this time, which was in the fire of afflictions, when many of its members were called to the stake, and burnt there for the sake of the Gospel, and yet were like pillars, firm and unshaken; the church was like the bush that Moses saw, which was on fire, but not consumed; Christ was with his people as they passed through it, that it could not kindle upon them so as to destroy them; and their faith, which was tried by it, was found to be much more precious than of gold that perisheth: or this may shew what Christ then was, both to his people and to his enemies; to his people his feet were as pillars of brass and marble, to bear them up, and support them under all their trials and afflictions; his goings forth towards them in a way both of providence and grace, were in such a manner, as to strengthen and confirm them in the faith of him against all the powers of hell and earth; and they were like fire, to consume his and their enemies; with his feet he trod upon them, and subdued them under him, who were as stubble, briars and thorns, easily consumed by him, when at the same time he was a wall of fire to his people, and the glory in the midst of them.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

And he had in his hand a little book open] By which is meant not the Bible, the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; or the book of the Gospel, the substance of which lies in a little room, and is no other than the preaching of

Christ, and him crucified, as God's way of salvation; and which is now more open and manifest, and more clearly made known unto the sons of men, under the Gospel-dispensation, than it was before, and especially since the time of the reformation, to which this book, and the prophecies of it, may have respect; but the same book is here designed, which in chapter v. 1. is represented as in the right-hand of him that sat on the throne, as shut and sealed; but the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, having taken it out of his hand, unloosed its seals, and opened it; and whereas we never read of his laying this book down, or of his delivering it to any other, he may be well supposed to be this mighty angel, who held it open in his hand: it may be said to be a little book, because now not only many of the scenes and visions in it were exhibited, upon the opening of the seals; but because at the time this vision refers to, many of its prophecies were accomplished, so that the bulk of it was greatly reduced; and it may be represented as open, because the seals of it were unloosed, and the things in it revealed; and it is to be observed, that as the several seals of this book, and the opening of them, refer to the state of the empire, both as pagan and as christian, as has been seen; so the little book itself, clear of these seals, set forth the state and condition of the church in the empire, under its different revolutions and appearances.

And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth] Which signifies that he was Lord and possessor of both, of the whole terraqueous globe, being the maker and supporter of it; and that his Gospel should be spread all over the world, both on the continent and in the islands of the sea; and that his kingdom should be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; that the abundance of the sea should be converted to him, or the maritime parts of the world should be subject to the scepter of his grace and government; and that the earth, and the uttermost parts of it, should be his possession, though it was now almost wholly in the hands of the Turk and Pope; and it may be observed, that he set his foot upon both earth and sea, out of which the two beasts arise, chapter xiii. 1, 11. which shall be destroyed by him.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

And cried with a loud voice] That all might hear, and to shew earnestness and affection, and that it was a matter of great importance, as well as

as to denote the certainty of it; what he said is not expressed, but seems to be the book-prophecy, or what regarded the state of his church and kingdom, in the several periods of time to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: and this voice of his was

As when a lion roareth] Loud and terrible; and indeed it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of Juda, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies.

And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices] Which some understand of the ministers of the Gospel in the times of the reformation, who were Boanergesses, sons of thunder, and think that they are the same with the angels in chapter xiv. 6, &c. or rather these may signify the denunciations of God's judgments, and of his wrath, both upon the eastern and western antichrist, the Turk and Pope, signified by the seven vials, hereafter to be poured out, mentioned in chap. xvi.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices] Or declared all they had to denounce upon the enemies of Christ and his church.

I was about to write] John taking particular notice of what they said, and believing it might be for the advantage, comfort, and support, of the church of Christ under its suffering circumstances, to be informed of what God had in reserve among the treasures of his wrath, for their adversaries, was going to put it down in writing, that he might retain it, and the better communicate it, and in obedience to the order given him, chap. i. 19.

And I heard a voice from heaven] From God the Father, for the Son of God in a visionary way was come down from heaven, in the form before described; and this voice answers to the *Bath Kol* of the Jews, and is the same which ordered John to write, chap. xiv. 13. though it here forbade him.

Saying unto me, Seal up those things] Treasure them up in thy mind, keep them within thy breast, hide them from men, for the present, and say nothing of them.

Which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not] That they may not be seen and read, at

present, because the same things were to be exhibited in another form, and at another time, under the seven vials; only it was thought proper that John should have some intimations of them for his own advantage, and to prepare him for the following vision, for the eating of the book, and for his prophesying before people, nations, tongues, and kings. Mr Daubuz is of opinion, that by these *seven thunders* are meant seven kingdoms which have received the reformation, and established it by law within their several dominions, whereby the doctrine and worship of the reformers are become the established religion there; and the laws by which it is established are *the voices* uttered by those supreme authorities; and they are these.

1. The German princes, making one republic. 2. The Swiss cantons. 3. Sweden. 4. Denmark, with Norway. 5. England and Ireland. 6. Scotland. 7. The United Provinces of the Netherlands: and whereas John, who represents the first reformers, and other faithful men, was for writing what these thunders uttered, this denotes the zeal and earnest desires of these good men to push the reformation further, and make a thorough work of it, as well as their expectation that now was the time in which the mystery of God was to be fulfilled, in which they were mistaken; wherefore John is bid to seal up these things, and not write them, which shows that the progress of the reformation was to be stopped from doing fully what the first reformers were prompted to by the supreme powers which encouraged them, and that by the opposition of other temporal princes; it not being the will of God that the glorious state of the church should arise from these thunders, and be built on their laws and establishments; and suggests, that this is not the time in which, nor these the ways and means, by which the mystery of God will be finished, which will not be until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, *v. 7.* whereas this period of time, to which the reformation belongs, is an event of the sixth trumpet: and this exposition bids very fair to be the right one.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth] His right foot being on the one, and his left foot upon the other, as described in *v. 2.*

Lifted up his hand to heaven] The Oriental versions read, "his right hand;" and so some copies, and the Complutensian edition: the man clothed in

in linen, *Dan. xii. 6, 7.* who is the same with the angel here, held up both his hands; the lifting up of the hand was a gesture used in swearing; see *Gen. xiv. 22.* so the Jews say (s), "the right hand," or by the right hand, *וּבְיָמֵינוּ*, "this is an oath," according to *Dan. xii. 7.* or whether the right hand or the left, is an oath, according to *Isaiah lxii. 8.*

6 And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer :

And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever] That is, by the living God, who is the true God; and is so described to distinguish him from idol gods, who have no life nor breath in them; and to assert the excellency and perfection of his nature, who has life in himself originally, and independently, is the fountain of life to all creatures living, and who are supported in their life and being by him; and so he always was, is, and ever will be; this is the same as swearing by Anchialus (p).

Who created heaven, and the things that therein are] The airy, starry, and third heavens, and the inhabitants of them, the fowls of the air, the sun, moon, and stars, and the angels of heaven, as well as the souls of departed saints, and the bodies of as many as are there.

And the earth, and the things that therein are] Men, beasts, and creeping things, trees, herbs, minerals, &c.

And the sea, and the things which are therein] The several sorts of fishes in it: this is also said to distinguish the great God from all false gods, who made not the heavens and the earth, who alone is, and ought to be the object of an oath, or by whom an oath is to be made, and not any creature whatsoever; and since the angel that here swears is the Lord Jesus Christ, this may be understood of him either as man, swearing by God the Father, in which respect the Father is greater than he; or as a divine person, and so swears by himself, *Heb. vi. 13.* for to himself do these characters belong of living for ever and ever, and of having made the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them: the thing he swears to is,

That there should be time no longer] Which is not to be understood of the cessation of time, and the

swallowing of it up in eternity, at the end of all things, when it will be no more measured out by the revolutions of the sun and moon, which will then be no more; for this did not take place upon the angel's oath, or at the time this vision refers to; for after this, there is to be time for the seventh angel to sound his trumpet in, though perhaps that is excepted in the next verse; and after the sounding of that, there will be the space of a thousand years, in which Christ will reign with his people on earth; and after that there will be some space of time for the Gog and Magog army to attack the beloved city; all which will be before the end of all things, or before eternity, properly speaking, takes place; and besides, such an illustrious appearing of Christ as before described, and so solemn an oath as is here made, do not seem necessary to ascertain a truth which no body doubts of; and every one knows that after this world, and all things in it are at an end, time will be no more. The true key to this passage is *Dan. xii. 7.* where the man clothed in linen swears, that to the end of wonders should be a time, times and a half, and here the angel swears that time should be no longer; that is, that these time, and times and half a time, should be no longer; that these dates would be up, and the events affixed to them be accomplished, when the seventh angel should begin to sound his trumpet: the same divisions of time are made in *Rev. xii. 14.* and are the same exactly with the 1260 days, or years, and the forty-two months of years, so often mentioned in this book; for a time, is a prophetic year, that is, 360 years; and times are two prophetic years, or 720 years; and half a time is half a prophetic year, or 180 years; in all 1260 years: now add the several events to be accomplished in this period of time, and it will give the full sense of this passage thus; the angel swears that the time of antichrist's reign, his tyranny over the saints, his persecution of them, which was to last forty-two months, *Rev. xiii. 5.* should be no longer; nor of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the Papists, which bears the same date, *Rev. xi. 2.* and is called the times of the Gentiles, *Luke xxi. 24.* nor of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which has just the same measure of duration, *Rev. xi. 3.* nor of the church's retirement, and being hid in the wilderness, *Rev. xii. 14.* in short, the time of the four monarchies, and of the last of them, the Roman, and of the last branch of that, the papal, should be no more, than till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, *Rev. xi. 15.* the words will bear to be rendered, as

Y y y

some

(s) T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2, fol. 58. 1.

(p) Martial Epigr. l. 11. ep. 60.

some have observed, "that there should be delay "no longer;" that is, of the coming and kingdom of Christ; though the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel swears to; every seal of the sealed book is a delay of, and a stop upon the open appearance of Christ's kingdom; and the opening of every seal is an advance to it; and when the sixth seal was opened, and paganism destroyed, and christianity spread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Christ might have been expected to have appeared; but there was a seventh seal to be opened, which was a stop upon it, and which when opened brought ruin and destruction upon the christian empire, both western and eastern, under the six first trumpets; and till the seventh sounds there will be a delay of Christ's kingdom, but when that sounds there will be no more a delay.

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound] This is an exception to what the angel had said and swore to, that time should be no longer; "but, or unless, or "except the time of the voice of the seventh "angel," as the Ethiopic version renders it; when a new period and sort of time should begin, very different from the former, which then should be no more; for now will be the time of Christ's kingdom on earth, which shall last a thousand years; this time will not be like the former, a time of darkness and ignorance, as was in some periods, partly through the errors and heresies which were propagated in early times, and thro' that barbarity and ignorance which the Goths, Huns, and Vandals spread over the empire, when they broke into it, and chiefly through the smoke of the bottomless pit, the false doctrine and worship of the Papists and Mahometans; but in the time of the seventh angel, all this gross darkness will be removed, and it will be a time of unspeakable and everlasting light, so that there will be no need of the sun and moon, of Gospel-ministrations and ordinances: nor will it be a time of affliction and persecution; time in that sense will be no more, as it has been under the ten pagan emperors, and under the Arian emperors, and under the papal hierarchy; for in this period there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, pain, and tears; though there will be time, it will be another sort of time, quite different from the former, which will be no more when

the seventh angel once begins; and as soon as he begins to sound, this will put an end to antichristian time; and at the end of his sounding will begin the time of Christ, or the thousand years reign: and then

The mystery of God should be finished] That is, the angel not only swears that time shall be no longer, but that also then shall be finished the mystery of God; by which is meant, not the resurrection of the dead, and the change of the living, which is called a mystery, 1 Cor. xv. 51. for though when this angel sounds, and has done sounding, and Christ comes, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the dead in Christ, will be finished, yet not the whole resurrection; for the rest of the dead will not live again till the end of the thousand years: but rather the Gospel is designed, which is often called the mystery, and the mystery of the Gospel, and contains many mysteries in it, which are stiled the mysteries of God; which respect him, his being, persons, operations, and grace; and are revealed and made known by him; and the finishing of this may respect the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, which will be before the end of the world, and whereby the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes of souls converted; wherefore it may be best of all to understand this of the church of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, even all the elect of God, whose number will now be finished and compleated, in the conversion of the Jews, and in the bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles, both which are called *mysteries*, Rom. xi. 25, 26. *Eph.* iii. 4-6. and now as the antichristian church is called *mystery*, *Babylon*, Rev. xvii. 5. and *the mystery of iniquity*, 2 Thess. ii. 7. so the true christian church, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, may bear the name of *the mystery of God*; and this may also take in the mystery of all God's providences and promises, and prophecies, respecting the state of his church and people on earth.

As he hath declared to his servants the prophets] As to Isaiah, in chap. lx. 3-5, &c. and lxvi. 8. and to Daniel, in chapters ii. 44. and vii. 25. and xii. 6, 7. and to Zechariah, in chap. xiv. 9. and others; and which was a Gospel declaration, as the word signifies; it was good news and glad tidings; glorious things were declared to them, and spoken by them, concerning the city and church of God, its happy state on earth, and Christ's reign in it.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take

take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

And the voice which I heard from heaven] In *7. 4.*

Spake to me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth] As John was to prophesy, *7. 11.* it was necessary that he should have a mission and a commission from heaven; and that he should have the open book of prophesy to prophesy out of; and that he should receive this from the angel's hands, who had unloosed its seals, and opened it: and just so to ordinary prophesying, or preaching, it is necessary that men should have their commission from heaven, should be called of God, and sent by him; and that they should have the book of the scriptures before them, and open to them, and speak according to these oracles, agreeable to the law and to the testimony, which are profitable for doctrine; and that they should also receive the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, with gifts, and a commission to preach it, from the angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, who has all power both in heaven and in earth; see *7. 2.*

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

And I went unto the angel] According to the order given him; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and, indeed, whither should any go for knowledge but to him who has the words of eternal life, and is the great prophet of the church? and to whom should John go to qualify him for prophesying, but to him, who as man and mediator, had this revelation of future things given him? chapter i. 1.

And said unto him, Give me the little book] He did not take it without his leave, but in a modest and humble manner asks him to give it him, that he might deliver out the prophecies in it to others: so ordinary prophets and ministers of the word should go to Christ, to have their eyes opened, their understandings enlightened, that they may understand the scriptures, and explain them to others.

And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up] Which must be understood not literally, but mystically; and the sense is this, take the book, and diligently peruse it, and with as much eagerness

as an hungry man would eat a meal; so greedy are some persons of reading, and as it were of devouring books; hence Cicero called (*g*) Cato, *Helluo librorum*, "a glutton at books;" and in such manner John is bid to take and eat this book, and look into it, and read it over diligently, and consider what was in it, and meditate upon it, and digest the things contained in it, and lay them up in his mind and memory; and for the present hide and conceal them, in like manner as he was bid to seal, and not write what the seven thunders uttered; and so, though this book is represented to him as open in the angel's hand, yet he must take it and eat it, and hide it in his belly, because the things in it as yet were not to be accomplished: so for ordinary prophesying, or preaching, the ministers of the word should diligently read the scriptures, constantly meditate on them, digest the truths of the Gospel in their own minds, and lay them up in the treasury of their hearts, and bring them forth from thence in due season.

And it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey] As Ezekiel's roll was to him when he eat it, *Ezek. iii. 1—3.* the Alexandrian copy, instead of "thy belly," reads "thy heart."

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up] As he was bid to do.

And it was in my mouth sweet as honey] So is the Gospel in the mouth of a faithful minister of it, who has a spiritual knowledge, and a savoury experience of it; and so it is in the mouth of an understanding hearer, who finds it, and eats it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and so this little book of prophesy being looked into, read, and considered by John, the first taste and knowledge he had of the things contained in it were exceeding grateful and delightful; the view it gave him of the glorious state of the church and kingdom of Christ on earth, filled him with unspeakable pleasure.

And as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter] So the ministration of the Gospel occasions bitterness, grief, and sorrow, to the preachers and professors of it, through the persecutions that attend it, the obstinacy and hardness of mens hearts against it, and its being the savour of death unto death to many that hear it; and so the little book

of

(g) Cicero de Finibus Bon. & Mal. l. 3. c. 2.

of prophesy, upon a perusal of it, giving to John a view of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of their bodies being killed, and lying exposed in the street of the great city, and of the church's flying into the wilderness, and continuing there for a time and times, and half a time, and of the barbarities and cruelties exercised on the saints by the whore of Rome, whom he saw made drunk with their blood, made his belly bitter, or filled him with sorrow, grief, and pain.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

And he said unto me] That is the angel, from whom John received the little book; the Alexandrian copy reads, "they said unto me;" both the voice of God the Father from heaven, that bid him take the book, and the angel that bid him eat it.

Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings] Which is to be understood not of John's preaching again to many people, and nations, after his return from his exile at Patmos, as he had done before his banishment thither; and much less of his prophesying along with Enoch and Elias, towards the end of the world, grounded upon two fabulous notions, the one that Enoch and Elias will appear in person before the coming of Christ, and the other, that John died not, but is still alive some where, and will continue till Christ's second coming; but rather of his delivering more prophecies out of the open little book; not *before*, as we render it, but either *concerning* many people, nations, tongues, and kings, as the Syriac version renders it; or *against* them, that is, those people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over which the whore of Babylon reigns, or has reigned, and the ten kings, and kings of the earth she rules over, *Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 15, 18.* Moreover, this may not so much design John's prophesying in person, as the prophesying of the witnesses, or ministers of the word in the several periods of time, whom John personated and represented; and of whom mention is made in the next chapter, to which this seems to be a transition.

CHAP. XI.

This chapter contains the order to measure the temple of God; an account of the two witnesses, their prophesying and power, their slaying, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, with what followed upon it; and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the effects of that.

1

A measuring rod is given to John, with an order to rise and measure the temple, altar, and worshippers, and to leave out the outer-court, which was to be given to the Gentiles, who tread the holy city under foot forty and two months, *ych. 1, 2.* the same date with the 1260 days the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, *ych. 3.* who are compared to two olive-trees and to two candlesticks, and are said to stand before God, *ych. 4.* and who are further described, by their power to destroy those that hurt them, with fire that proceeds out of their mouths; to shut the heaven, that it rain not during their prophesy; to turn water into blood, and smite the earth with all manner of plagues at pleasure, *ych. 5, 6.* but when the time of their prophesy and testimony is expired, their enemies will have the advantage of them; the antichristian beast of Rome, described by the place of his ascent, the bottomless pit, will fight against them, overcome, and kill them; their dead bodies will be exposed publicly within the Roman jurisdiction, and not suffered to be interred; and their enemies will make a public and general rejoicing over them, *ych. 7-10.* but after a short space of time, they will revive, and stand upon their feet, to the surprise of all spectators; and being invited by a voice from heaven, will ascend thither, in the sight of their enemies; upon which will be an earthquake, in which the tenth part of the city of Rome will fall, and seven thousand men be slain; which will cause consternation in the rest, and put them upon giving glory to God, *ych. 11-13.* and this will put an end to the second wo, and the third will quickly follow, *ych. 14.* which is the sounding of the seventh trumpet; the effects of which are, voices heard in heaven, declaring that the kingdoms of the world are become Christ's, and that he shall reign for ever and ever, *ych. 15.* upon which the four and twenty elders that sat on their seats before God, congratulate him, worship, and give thanks unto him, as the Lord God Almighty and eternal; partly because of his visible power and kingdom he now takes to himself; and partly because the time of avenging his people that had suffered for him upon the nations, which makes them angry, was now come; as also because now would be given rewards to all his prophets, saints, and those that feared him, as well as antichrist and his followers would be destroyed, *ych. 16-18.* and other effects of this trumpet are, the opening of the temple of God in heaven, a fight of the ark of the testament, lightnings, voices, thunders, an earthquake, and great hail, *ych. 19.*

AND

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod] A measuring reed, which with the Jews was six cubits long, *Ezek. xl. 5.* with the Greeks and Romans ten feet long; the Ethiopic version here calls it a "golden reed," as in chapter *xxi. 15.* This was given unto John very likely by the same angel that gave him the little book, since he afterwards bids him arise and measure with it; and by it seems to be designed the holy scripture, or the word of God, which is sometimes called a line, a rule, and rod, *Psal. xix. 4.* and *Psal. cx. 2.* *Gal. vi. 16.* and which is the rule and measure of doctrine and faith; and by it all doctrine is to be tried and measured, and whatsoever is not agreeable to it, is not of God, nor to be received, but rejected; and it is the rule and measure of all discipline, worship, and practice; it lays down the plan of a Gospel church, which should be gathered out of the world, and separated from it; it shows who are the proper materials of it, what officers are to be constituted in it, and what ordinances are to be administered, and what laws and rules should be observed in receiving and rejecting of members, and according to which the whole community should walk; in short, it directs to all the forms, laws, and ordinances of God's house; and this is the use John, or those whom he personates, were to make of it.

And the angel stood] The same that stood with his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and gave to John the little book, chapter *x. 1, 2, 9.* though it may be not in the same place and situation, but rather at the gate of the temple, as in *Ezek. xl. 3.* This clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Syriac version and Complutensian edition, and is rightly retained, or otherwise it would seem as if the reed spoke.

Saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein] The allusion is to the temple of Jerusalem, with its appurtenances; there were the most holy place, and the holy place, which was the inner court of the priests, into which they only entered, which was strictly speaking the temple, and is referred to here; and there was the altar of burnt-offerings, which was in the court of the priests, and the altar of incense, which was before the vail that divided between the holy and holy of holies; and

then there was the outer court for all the Israelites to worship in, referred to in the next verse: and by *the temple of God* is here meant the church, of which the temple was a type; and so particular congregated churches are called temples, *1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.* *2 Cor. vi. 16.* *Eph. ii. 21.* Solomon, a man of peace, was the builder of the one, and Christ, the prince of peace, the builder of the other; Solomon's temple was built of hewn stones, made ready before they were brought thither, and a true church of Christ consists of lively stones, hewed and fitted for this spiritual building by the Spirit of God; the temple at Jerusalem was built on a high mountain, and on the north of the city, the church is built upon the rock Christ Jesus, and the Gospel church, or churches, in the times of the sixth trumpet, which this vision refers to, and to the close of it, are in the northern parts of Europe; and as the temple was for religious use and service, for the worship of God, and sacrifices, so is the Gospel church, and so are Gospel churches, for the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, and for the offering up the sacrifices of prayer and praise; and as in the most holy place were the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, and as it was the place of the divine presence, where God granted communion to his people, so in the church are held forth the mysteries of the covenant, Christ as the mercy-seat and the propitiatory, in whom the displays of grace are made, and through whom the saints have fellowship with God, and enjoy his presence: *the altar* may design Christ himself, by whom the saints draw nigh to God, offer up their sacrifices, and are accepted with him: or the whole of Gospel worship and ordinances, as prayer, preaching, singing of praise, and the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper: and they *that worship therein, or thereat*, are the royal priesthood, or such who are made kings and priests unto God, for none went into the inner court, or served at the altar, but priests; and who make use of Christ the altar, of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in their approaches to God; and who are praying souls, wait at the altar of incense, and draw nigh to the throne of grace with a true heart, and worship God in spirit and in truth: now *measuring* of these, respects not the primitive church for the first three or four hundred years, and the formation of that according to the rule of God's word, and as a pattern to other churches; for though the apostolical church, or the church as it was in the apostles time, and as described in their writings, was such a church; yet the church, for such a space of time as above, was not; there were great depopulations

partures both from doctrine and discipline, the mystery of iniquity began to work, and way was made for the man of sin; and it was far from being a pattern to be imitated; and besides, this measuring refers to the times of the sixth trumpet, and the close of it: nor does it respect the sealing of the 144000 between the sixth seal and the opening of the seventh seal, which was for the protection and security of them, during the times of the six trumpets, which brought desolation into the empire, and apostacy into the church; though measuring sometimes may seem to denote protection, as in *Zech. ii. 1, 2, 5*: and though the outer court is, and will be a protection to spiritual worshippers, so long as it is not in the hands of the Gentiles, yet this is not the sense, at least not the whole of it: nor does this refer to the hiding of the church in the wilderness, during the reign of antichrist; which might seem to be signified by the internal worshippers retiring to the altar, and to the holy and the most holy place, and being concealed there; and especially since the opening of the temple in *ch. 19.* may seem to be opposed to this; but that takes in too large a compass of time, this being an affair relating only to the close of the sixth trumpet, and which was to be before the seventh trumpet sounded: it seems rather to respect the times of the reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, when the measuring reed of the word was taken in hand, and used; but then it was used chiefly for the restoration of pure doctrine, and with good success, but not so much for the regulating, and orderly discipline of the churches, for the purity of Gospel worship and ordinances; most, if not all the reformed churches, set out upon too broad a bottom, being national, provincial, or parochial; there was a temple, and an altar erected for God, and there were internal and spiritual worshippers; but then they took in the outward court, which should not have been measured in, and circumscribed with them, but should have been left out; but the time for this was not yet come, but now is: in short, I take it that this measuring refers to what was done in the last age, particularly in our nation; and that it has respect to the separation from the national church, when churches, more or less, were gathered and formed according to the Gospel plan, and the primitive institution; a work which never was set about, and so effectually done before, since the age of the apostles: the baptized and congregational churches are the temple, altar, and worshippers measured, who have both the true doctrine, worship, and discipline of God's house among them; a set of men in the last age were raised up, who drew a plan of churches, and of church-discipline, according to the ancient

model; gathered churches out of the world, and constituted them according to the order of the Gospel; circumscribed them, and inclosed them according to the rules of God's word, admitting none but such into communion who were judged by the churches subjects of the grace of God; and rejected and excluded from among them such as were wicked and scandalous; and so reduced the pure members of churches to a small number, a little flock, a few names in Sardis: and I am of opinion that the measuring reed must be used again; we have got of late, through negligence, or a want of a spirit of discerning, too many of the outward court among us; who must be left out, in order to be given up to other hands, as follows.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not] The allusion is to the court of the Israelites, where was the great croud and company of worshippers, even the national church of the Jews, called by Ezekiel the outer court, chapters *xlii. 14.* and *xlvi. 21.* and which was measured in *Ezek. xlii. 20.* but this must not be measured: this designs not the visible church apostatized, as succeeding the pure, primitive, and apostolical church, or the apostate church of Rome, antichrist and his followers, for these are meant by the Gentiles, to whom this outward court is given; this outward court, or the worshippers in it, intend a distinct set of worshippers from the internal worshippers, the priests of God, in the temple, altar, and inner court, and from the Gentiles, the Papists; and are no other than carnal Protestants, the bulk of the reformed churches, who have only the name, but not the nature of living christians, have a form of godliness, but deny its power, are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, and worship only in an external manner, attend to outward forms and ceremonies, but know nothing of true doctrine, pure worship, or spiritual religion; and which are very numerous, as the worshippers in the outward court were: now these, upon a new measuring and regulating of the churches, are ordered to be left, or cast out, and not taken into the dimensions of the Gospel church; these were to be separated from, and have been, and not to be admitted members of regular and orderly constituted churches, and which is here reckoned a sort of casting

casting of them out; the reason of which follows.

For it is given unto the Gentiles] By whom are meant the Papists, who are no other than paganized christians, having introduced a great deal of Gentilism into the divine service; as the worshipping of the virgin Mary, angels, and saints departed, which is in imitation of the demon-worship of the heathens; as also the dedication of their churches to saints, their saints days, divers festivals, and many other rites and ceremonies, are plainly of pagan original; and therefore they may very well be called by this name: now it seems by these words that the bulk of the reformed churches, the croud of outward-court worshippers, will be gained over to the Popish party, and fall off to the church of Rome, to which their doctrines and practices are plainly verging; the pope of Rome, as low a condition as he now is in, will be set *in statu quo*, before his utter destruction; he will regain all his former dominions, and be in possession of them, at the time of his ruin; the whore of Rome, the antichristian Babylon, will sit as a queen, and promise herself a great deal of peace and pleasure, the inward-court worshippers and witnesses being slain, and she restored to all her former power and grandeur; when in one day, on a sudden, her destruction will come upon her, when the term of the beast's reign will be expired, mentioned in the next clause.

And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months] By the holy city is meant all the kingdoms of Europe, or what has been called Christendom, the western empire as christian, the main seat of the christian religion, or all the churches stiled christian, and so called in allusion to Jerusalem, which bears this name, *Matt. iv. 5.* and which was still of a far larger extent than the outward court: the treading of this under foot, does not barely design possessing of it, or worshipping in the same place, as the phrase of treading in the courts does in *Isaiab i. 12.* but a tyrannical power over it, and a wasting, spoiling, and destroying it, in allusion to Jerusalem being troden under foot, wasted and destroyed by the Gentiles, or the Romans, *Luke xxi. 24.* and the duration of this tyrannical and oppressive reign will be *forty and two months*; see *Rev. xiii. 5.* which being reduced to years, make just three years and a half: but then this date cannot be understood strictly and literally; for such a term can never be sufficient for the whore's reign, who was to rule over the kings of the earth, and all nations were to drink of the wine of her fornication: this is too short a time for her to gain so much power, honour, and riches in, as the

thirteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters of this book shew, as well as too short for the afflictions and persecutions of the saints by her; wherefore this must be understood prophetically of so many months of years; and a month with the Chaldeans consisting of thirty days, and a year of 360 days, which account Daniel used, and John after him, forty-two months, reckoning a day for a year, after the prophetic stile, make 1260 years; which is the exact time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being hid and nourished in the wilderness, and of the beast's reign, and so of the holy city being troden under foot. Now this date is not to be reckoned from the outer court being given to the Gentiles, but from the first of antichrist's reign, when the pope of Rome was declared universal bishop; and is only here mentioned, to shew, that the giving of the outward court to his Gentiles, will be towards the expiration of this date.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses] By whom are meant, not Enoch and Elias, as some of the ancient fathers thought, who, they supposed, would come before the appearance of Christ, and oppose antichrist, and be slain by him, which sense the papists greedily catch at; nor are the scriptures, the two Testaments, Old and New, designed, though their name and number agree, and also their office, which is to testify of Christ; but then to be clothed in sackcloth, to be killed, and rise again, and ascend to heaven, are things that cannot so well be accommodated to them: but these witnesses intend the ministers of the Gospel, and churches of Christ, who have bore testimony for Christ, and against antichrist, ever since he appeared in the world; and particularly the churches and ministers in Piedmont bid fair for this character; who were upon the spot when antichrist arose, always bore their protest against him, and were ever independent of the church of Rome, and subsisted in the midst of the darkness of the apostacy; and suffered much, and very great persecutions from the Papists; and have stood their ground, and continue to this day; and have been like olive-trees and candlesticks, imparting oil and light to others. Though they ought not to be considered exclusive of other ministers and churches, who also have bore, and still do bear a witness for Christ, and against the idolatries of the church of Rome: no two individual persons can be meant; since these witnesses were.

were to prophesy 1260 days, that is, so many years, but a succession of ministers and churches; and these are called *two*, both on account of the fewness of them, and because the testimony of two is sufficient to confirm any matter; and it may be in allusion to the various instances of two eminent persons, being raised up at certain periods of time, as Moses and Aaron, at the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; Caleb and Joshua at their entrance into Canaan; Elijah and Elisha in the idolatrous times of Ahab; and Joshua and Zerubbabel at the rebuilding and finishing of the second temple. Now the angel, and who is Christ, here promises, that he will give something to these witnesses: some supply the words, *I will give it*; that is, the holy city, or the church, to them, to be taken care of, and defended; others, *I will give them a mouth, and wisdom*, which their adversaries shall not be able to resist, according to the promise in *Luke xxi. 15*. We supply the words, *I will give power*; that is, authority to preach the Gospel, and strength to profess it, and to continue to bear a testimony to it, signified by prophesying; see *1 Cor. xiv. 1, 3*.

And they shall prophesy] That is, "that they may prophesy;" which is supported by the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, the former rendering the words, "I will give to my two witnesses to prophesy," and the latter, "I will give in command to my two witnesses that they may prophesy;" the sense is, that Christ will give to them a mission and commission, sufficient authority, all needful gifts and grace, courage and presence of mind to preach his Gospel, to hold forth his word, and bear a testimony for him during the whole time of the apostacy, even

A thousand two hundred and threescore days] That is, so many years, which, as before observed, is the date of the beast's reign, of the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and of the church's retirement into the wilderness: it is observable, that the date of the beast's reign and tyranny is expressed by months, and the date of the church's being in the wilderness, and the prophesying of the witnesses is signified by days; and the reason which some give is not despicable, as that the beast, and his followers, are the children of darkness, and of the night, over which the moon presides, from whence months are numbered; and the church, and the witnesses, are children of the day, over which the sun rules. The habit of these witnesses, during their time of prophesying, follows,

Clothed in sackcloth] Expressive either of their outward state and condition, being poor, mean, and abject, whilst the followers of the beast are

clad in silks, and live deliciously; or else of the inward frame of their minds, as mourning for the sad estate of the church of Christ, groaning under the tyranny and persecutions of antichrist.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

These are the two olive trees] Or represented by the two olive trees in *Zech. iv. 3, 11—14*. which there design Joshua and Zerubbabel; and who in laying out themselves, their gifts and wealth, in rebuilding and finishing the temple, were types of these witnesses, the ministers of the Gospel, in the successive ages of the apostacy; who may be compared to olive trees, because of the oil of grace, and the truth of it in them; and because of the gifts of the Spirit of God bestowed on them, or their having that anointing which teacheth all things; and because they freely impart their gifts, and the golden oil of the Gospel unto others, and also bring the good tidings of peace and salvation by Christ, of which the olive leaf is a symbol; and because they are like the olive tree, fat, flourishing, and fruitful in spiritual things; they are sons of oil, and God's anointed ones.

And the two candlesticks] Which hold forth the light of the word, in the midst of popish darkness: this shows that churches, as well as ministers, are designed by the witnesses, since the candlesticks are explained of the churches, *chap. i. 20*. though the simile well agrees with ministers of the word, who are the lights of the world, or hold forth the light of the Gospel, which is put into them by Christ: and these olive trees and candlesticks are represented as

Standing before the God of the earth] Ministering unto him, enjoying his presence, and having his assistance, and being under his protection. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "the Lord of the earth;" and so the Complutensian edition; see *Zech. iv. 14.* and *chap. vi. 5*.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

And if any man will hurt them] Do any injury to their persons, or properties, oppose their writings, blaspheme their doctrines, and hinder their ministrations; whoever they be, whether they be any

any that live among them, or in other parts; whether they be secret or open enemies; or whether they be of the outward court, or be really Gentiles or Papists; and especially if they do them any injustice, if they wrong, oppress, afflict, and distress them knowingly and willingly.

Fire proceedeth out of their mouth] By which may be meant the word of God, which they preach and hold forth, which is comparable to fire, *Jer.* xxiii. 29. both for light, it being a means of enlightening sinners, who are darkness itself; and of directing saints in their walk and conversation; and of detecting the errors, immoralities, idolatry, and superstition of men, and particularly of the church of Rome; who cannot bear the light of this word, and therefore forbid the reading of it to the laity, and keep it locked up from them in the Latin tongue: and also for the heat of it, it being the means of quickening, or of conveying a vital heat to dead sinners; and of warming and comforting the saints, causing their hearts to burn within them, whilst they hear or read it, or meditate upon it; and of scorching and tormenting reprobate sinners, and filling them with wrath, pain, and anguish, especially the followers of antichrist; and this is greatly designed, for this has a particular reference to the pouring out of the fourth vial, *Rev.* xvi. 9. Likewise, the word of God may be compared to fire for its purity in itself, for every word of his is pure; and for its purifying nature, when faithfully preached, and powerfully applied, it penetrates deep, it searches, and discovers, and purges from the dross of profaneness, false doctrine, and will-worship; and for its consuming nature, as follows, it pronouncing damnation to unbelievers and impenitent sinners, and it being the savour of death unto death to such: or else the prayers of these witnesses are intended by the fire that proceeds out of their mouth, for vengeance on their enemies, who hinder their ministrations, blaspheme the truth, and shed their blood; which do not arise from a passionate and revengeful spirit, but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, and truth; and which prayers are heard by God, who will avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night: the allusion is to the fire, which, at the request of Moses, came forth from the Lord, and destroyed two hundred and fifty persons, that opposed him and Aaron; and to the fire which Elias called for from heaven, upon the captains, and the fifties, that came to take him, who were types of these witnesses; see *Numb.* xvi. 3, 29, 35. *2 Kings* i. 9—12. And also this fire may denote the denunciations of God's wrath by them upon the

VOL. V.

antichristian party, these being as wood, and their words as fire, to consume them; see *Jer.* v. 14. *Rev.* xiv. 9—11, 18.

And devoureth their enemies] Whether open or secret; just as the fire devoured Nadab and Abihu, the offerers of strange fire, which the Lord commanded not; so the fire out of the mouth of God's faithful servants, devours such who introduce divers and strange doctrines, and the inventions of men into the church of God; the light of God's word convinces and confounds them, though it may not convert them; it flashes in their consciences, and distresses them, so that they gnaw their tongues for pain; there being nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour and destroy them, though not corporally, yet spiritually and eternally; for even these shall afterwards make war against them, conquer them, and slay them, and shall see them ascend to heaven, *1 Pet.* 7, 12.

And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed] This is repeated, partly to shew the certainty of this destruction; and partly to point out the manner of it, which will be not by the use of carnal weapons: these enemies of the witnesses will not be killed by the sword or any other weapon, but by the word of God, and through the prayers of the saints, and by the denunciations of God's judgments on them. The Jews express the doctrines and traditions of their Rabbins, delivered from one to another, by fire, proceeding out of their mouths; who say (*r*), "Rab sat before Rabbi, and there went forth, ויקצין רבו ספומי, sparks of fire from the mouth of Rab, into the mouth of Rabbi, and from the mouth of Rabbi, into the mouth of Rabbi," which the Gloss explains of their communicating their doctrines and traditions to one another.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophesy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

These have power to shut heaven] For these have the keys of the kingdom of heaven given them, and whatever they bind or loose on earth, is bound or loosed in heaven; or in other words, having the true key of knowledge in matters, both of doctrine and discipline, given them, whatever they declare, according to the word of God, to be doctrines fit to be received or rejected, and to be

(*r*) T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 137. 2. Juchasin, fol. 113. 2.

be the ordinances of God, and matters of worship to be attended to, and what are not, should be so: and in particular,

That it rain not in the days of their prophesy] That is, on their enemies, the antichristian party; for otherwise it must rain on those to whom they minister, their prophesy itself being rain in a spiritual sense: so rain is explained of prophesy in the Targum on *Isaiab* v. 6. which paraphrases the words thus; "I will command the prophets that they do not prophesy upon them prophesy:" for this is to be understood not literally, since the days of their prophesy, or preaching in sackcloth, are 1260, that is, 1260 years, and which is the term and duration of antichrist's reign: wherefore, if this was the case, there must be a famine and great distress, during this long space of time; but as this is not matter of fact, so it would not comport with that plenty, luxury, and deliciousness, in which the whore of Babylon is said to live: but the words are to be taken in a spiritual sense, and to be understood of the Gospel, and doctrines of it, or the word of God, which is sometimes compared to rain, *Deut.* xxxii. 2. *Isaiab* lv. 10, 11. God is the author and giver of rain, and he only; none of the vanities, or idols of the Gentiles, can give it; has the rain a father? it has, but not on earth, only God who is in heaven; and so the Gospel is of God, and it is he only that can make men able ministers of it; the rain comes down from above, from heaven, and of the same original and descent is the Gospel, it is the voice speaking from heaven; the rain falls, according to divine direction, in one place, and not another; on one city, and not another; and so the Gospel is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; it is forbid here, and ordered there. Showers of rain moisten and soften the earth, and make it susceptible of seed; and the Gospel is the means of softening hard hearts, and of making them capable of receiving suitable impressions: rain refreshes the earth, revives the plants and trees, and makes them fruitful; and so the Gospel, attended with a divine blessing, refreshes drooping saints, revives the work of God in them, and is the means of filling them with all the fruits of righteousness. Now the withholding of this rain denotes a famine, not of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and as it is a judgment on a nation, or on a city, not to be rained upon, so it is a spiritual judgment upon a people, when God commands his clouds, his ministers, to rain no rain of the Gospel on them; and it is one of the judgments upon the antichristian party, that they have not the Gospel

preached unto them, nor any dew of powerful and efficacious grace distilled on them, but are left to their blindness, darkness, and hardness of heart: and these witnesses carrying the Gospel along with them, where they prophesy and preach, is called a shutting up heaven, so that it rain not on the followers of antichrist, from whom they separate themselves, or by whom they are cast out; and this is ascribed to them, and is owing to their removal or ejection; much in the same sense as the night and darkness are to the sun's remove; that is, these follow upon it. The allusion is to the withholding of rain in the times of Elijah, one of the types of these witnesses, because of the idolatries of Ahab and Jezebel, *1 Kings* xvii. 1. and chapter xviii. 1, 41, 45. In like manner is the rain of the Gospel withheld during the reign of antichrist, because of the idolatry and superstition of the apostacy.

And have power over waters to turn them to blood] By waters are meant people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, and particularly those over whom antichrist reigns, *Rev.* xvii. 15. and turning of them into blood, designs the confusions and wars raised among them on account of the prophesying of these witnesses, and the persecutions and bloodshed which followed upon it; which eventually are the end and issue of preaching the Gospel; see *Matt.* x. 34, 35. The allusion is to one of the plagues of Egypt, and to Moses and Aaron, who were types of these witnesses turning the waters of Egypt into blood, *Exod.* vii. 20. and answers to the second and third vials, *Rev.* xvi. 3, 4.

And to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will] Alluding to the plagues of Egypt, one of the names of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, in a following verse, and which is meant by the earth here; and referring to the rest of the seven vials poured out by these witnesses, signified by seven angels; and their having power so to do as often as they will, is to be understood of these plagues being inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth, or followers of antichrist, in answer to their prophesies and prayers, which are made according to the will of God, and so always have their effect, being such.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

And when they shall have finished their testimony] For Christ, his truths and ordinances; when they are about to finish it, and almost concluded it, even towards the close of the 1260 days or years,

years, in which they must prophesy in sackcloth : or else their testimony and their prophesying may be considered as two distinct things, and the one be finished before the other ; their open public testimony, as witnesses, so as to be heard, attended to, and received, will be finished before the last war of the beast against them, in which they will be killed ; but their prophesying will continue to the end of the beast's reign, these two being cotemporary, of equal date, beginning and ending together ; for they will prophesy, when they are dead ; being dead they will yet speak, and their very death will be a prophesying or foretelling, that the ruin of antichrist is at hand ; and upon their resurrection and ascension, that will immediately come on. But when their testimony is finished, by a free and open publication of the Gospel,

The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit] The same with that in chapter xiii. 11. with which compare chapter xvii. 8. and which is no other than the Romish antichrist ; called a beast for his filthiness and cruelty ; and said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, out of hell, because his coming is after the working of Satan : he is raised up, influenced and supported by him, he is a creature of his, and has his power, seat, and authority from him, the great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan ; his original and rise are the same with those of his doctrine and worship, the smoke of the bottomless pit ; they all come out of it, and they will return thither again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, " the fourth beast " that ascendeth," &c. as if it was the same with Daniel's fourth beast, *Daniel* vii. 7, 19. as it doubtless is. Now this filthy and savage beast

Shall make war against them] The witnesses ; a war he has been making against the saints ever since he was in power, by his decrees, his counsels, his anathemas, and by sword, fire, and faggot, chapter xiii. 7. but this will be his last war, and it will be a dreadful one ; it will be the last struggle of the beast ; and though it will be attended with the conquest and slaughter of the witnesses, yet it will lead on to, and issue in his own ruin : this is *the hour of temptation*, in chap. iii. 10.

And shall overcome them] Not by arguments taken out of the word of God, by which their mouths will be stopped, so as to be confounded, and have nothing to say, or so as to yield to him, and give up the truths and ordinances of the Gospel ; but by outward force and tyranny, so as that they shall be obliged to give way, and he

will take possession of the kingdoms and nations, in which they have prophesied : he will first attack the outward court, the bulk of formal professors, and will prevail over them ; and then the outworks being taken, he will more easily come at the inner court worshippers within the temple.

And kill them] Not corporally, but civilly ; for as their dead bodies lying three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, unburied, and their resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, cannot be understood literally, so neither the killing of them ; not but that in this war there may be a great slaughter, and much blood shed, in a literal sense : but the killing spoken of seems to regard them, not as men, but as witnesses ; they will not be suffered to bear an open testimony any longer ; they will be silenced ; they will be banished, or removed into corners ; and they will not only be under the censures, excommunications, and anathemas of the Romish antichrist, but they will loose all credit and esteem among those, who once pretended to be their friends ; who will be ashamed of them, and will join in reproaching and rejecting them ; so that their ministrations will be quite shut up, and at an end.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city] Not Jerusalem, which was destroyed when John had this vision, and which will not be rebuilt at the time it refers to ; nor is it ever called the great city, though the city of the great king ; however, not in this book, though the new Jerusalem is so called, chapter xxi. 10. but that can never be designed here ; but the city of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, the whole empire of the Romish antichrist, which is often called the great city in this book ; see chapters xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18, 21. The city of Rome itself was very large, and the Roman empire still larger, so as to be called the whole world ; and the antichristian see of Rome has been of great extent. Now as the street of a city denotes a public open place in it, a place of concourse and resort, *Prov.* i. 20, 21. the dead bodies of those witnesses being said to lie here, may design the publicness of their silence, disgrace, and contempt ; and that the silencing and degrading them, and depriving them of all privileges, will be known all over the antichristian

empire; and that they will be exposed to public ignominy and shame, their persons, their characters, their testimony, their doctrines, their writings, their churches and families, and all that belong to them: or else this street may design some part of the Romish jurisdiction, and it may be Great Britain may be particularly designed; for where should the dead bodies of the witnesses lie, but where they are slain? and where can they be slain, but where they are? and where are they, at least where are there so many as in these islands? It may be objected, that Great Britain is not a part of the see of Rome, does not belong to the jurisdiction of it; to this it may be replied, that in this last war of the beast, the outer court will be given to the Gentiles, the bulk of the reformed churches will fall off to popery, and their countries again fall into the hands of the pope, and among the rest, Great Britain. The fears of Dr Goodwin seem to be too just, and well-grounded, that the prophecy in *Dan. xi. 45.* respects our island, which speaks of antichrist planting the *tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, or the mountain of delight, of holiness.* Now where has God such a mountain of delight, or a people that are the darling of his soul, as here? where in all the globe is there such a spot where God has so many saints, so many holy ones, as in this island? it may have been truly called a glorious holy mountain, or a mountain of delight: and what place between the seas is there, to which these characters can agree, but Great Britain? Here then antichrist will plant the tabernacles of his palace; but it will be but a tabernacle, or tent; it will be but for a short time, as it follows, *yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.* Now this great city, in the street of which the bodies of the witnesses will lie exposed, is that

Which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt] That is, it is called so in a mystic and allegoric sense, in distinction from the literal sense; see *1 Cor. x. 3, 4.* it is called Sodom because of the fulness of bread, plenty and abundance of all outward good things in it; as well as for the pride and idleness of the priests, monks, and friars which swarm in it; and also for the open profaneness and contempt of true and serious religion in it; and particularly for the sin of Sodomy, so frequently committed here, with impunity, yea with allowance, and even with commendation. This sin was extolled with praises, as Brightman observes, by John à Casa, archbishop of Beneventum; and was defended in a book, published for that purpose, by one Mutius; and which was allowed by the bulls and letters patent of pope Ju-

lius the third: and it is called Egypt, because of its tyranny and oppression; as the Egyptians kept the Israelites in bondage, and made them to serve with rigour, and embittered their lives, so the pope, and his Gentiles, or Egyptians, have in a most oppressive and rigorous manner tyrannized over the souls, bodies, and estates of men; and also because of its great idolatry, Egypt being very remarkable for the number of its deities, and the meanness of them; by which the idols and idolatries of the church of Rome may be fitly expressed.

Where also our Lord was crucified] That is, in the great city, which is fitly compared to Sodom and Egypt; for Christ was crucified actually in Judea, which was then become a Roman province, and under Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor, and by his order, and suffered a Roman kind of death, crucifixion, and for a crime he was charged with, though a false one, against Cesar the Roman emperor; and Christ has been crucified at Rome itself in his members, who have suffered persecution and death, and even the death of the cross there; and he has been crucified afresh, both by the sins and immoralities of those who have bore the christian name there, and by the frequent sacrifices of him in the mass. Moreover, by this periphrasis may be meant Jerusalem; and the sense be, that as the great city, or jurisdiction of Rome, may be spiritually or mystically called Sodom and Egypt, so likewise the place where our Lord was crucified, that is, Jerusalem; and that for this reason, because that as Jerusalem stoned and killed the prophets of the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of it were found all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, so in Rome, in mystical Babylon, will be found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon earth, *Matt. xxiii. 35, 37. Rev. xviii. 24.* The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "where also their Lord was crucified;" and the Arabic version more expressly, "the Lord of these two;" that is, the two witnesses.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations] These are either the enemies of the witnesses, who consisted of the people, kindred, tongues, and nations, out from among whom they

they were chosen, redeemed, and called; and before or against whom John, personating these witnesses, prophesied; and over whom the Romish antichrist sits and rules, chapters v. 9. and x. 11. and xiii. 7. and xvii. 15. or else their friends, either real or pretended; since it is not said *the people*, nor *all the people, kindred, tongues, and nations*, as it is when the antichristian party are spoken of; and seeing *they that dwell upon the earth*, in the following verse, are mentioned as a distinct company from these; and these are said to be some of, or out of the people, &c. and accordingly the following words will admit of different senses.

Shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves] Now, though this is not literally to be understood, yet it may have some reference to the usages of the witnesses enemies, who sometimes have not allowed them a burial, so the bodies of John Hufs, and Jerom of Prague, were burnt, and their ashes cast into the Rhine; the body of Peter Ramus was cast about the streets, thrown into ponds and ditches, then dragged out, and beat with rods; and some have had their bones dug up again, after they have been buried many years, and then burnt, and their ashes scattered abroad, as Wicliff and Bucer here in England: but as this is to be understood in a mystical and allusive sense, the meaning is, as it may refer to enemies, that they shall see, and look upon with joy and pleasure, and with scorn and contempt, and insult over the witnesses, being silenced and deprived of power and opportunity of prophesying, and as quite dispirited, cast down, and trodden under foot; and whereas not to have a burial granted, is always reckoned a piece of the greatest barbarity and inhumanity, as well as of ignominy and reproach, and is expressive of a most unhappy and miserable condition; see *Psal. lxxix. 2, 3. Jer. xxii. 19. Eccles. vi. 3.* so it here signifies, that the enemies of the witnesses having obtained power over them, will not only insult them, but treat them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and expose them to scorn and contempt; and it represents their case, as being very uncomfortable, and deplorable: or as it may respect friends, real or pretended, such as had been, or were, the sense is, that they shall see them in their unhappy condition, and look upon them with pity and compassion; and shall thoroughly consider, and lay to heart, their case and circumstances; and shall remember them, their doctrine and testimony, and their godly lives, and not suffer them to be buried in oblivion; and shall also call to mind this prediction concerning them, that they

should continue in this state but three days and a half, and then revive; and therefore they shall entertain hopes of them, as persons sometimes do of their friends, when they are in doubt whether they are dead or no, and therefore keep them above ground for some time, and will not suffer them to be buried; for when put into the grave, there is no more hope, or when a person has been dead, as in the case of Lazarus, four days; so that this conduct may express the kindness and hope of these friends: or it may be, the meaning is, that they will not look at them but very shyly, and at a distance, as being ashamed of them, and having no heart to succour, relieve, and encourage them; but act as did the priest and the Levite towards the man that fell among thieves, and was left half dead, looked upon him, and turned from him, to the other side of the way; as also, that they will not entertain them, or give them any shelter and refuge among them, when in this their distress, they shall apply to them: the grave is a resting-place; there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest, *Job iii. 17.* Such resting-places the witnesses in former times have found, as the English in queen Mary's days found at Frankford and Geneva, and other places, and since in Holland; and as now the French refugees here, who being killed in a civil sense in their own country, are put into graves, or are allowed places of rest and security here: but now these witnesses will find none; those who pretended to be their friends will look shy upon them, and not harbour them, yea, will not suffer any to do it; they will by some public act, through fear of the popish party, forbid the reception and entertainment of them. The time that this will last, will be *three days and a half*; after which, as in *2. 11.* they will live again, which cannot be understood literally of so many precise days; for it will not be possible, that in so short a time, the news of the slaying of the witnesses should be spread among the inhabitants of the earth, and they be able to express their general joy and rejoicing, and to send their gifts to one another upon this occasion, as is signified in the following verse; nor does this design so long a time, as the time and times, and half a time, elsewhere mentioned; or that it is a period of the same date and duration with the forty-two months, in which the holy city is trodden under foot, and the 1260 days, or years in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; for during that time they will prophesy, and hold forth their testimony, though in sackcloth; but now they will be killed, and during this space will

will lie dead, and in entire silence: besides, it will be when they have finished their testimony, or towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that this war and slaughter will be, and when these three days and a half will take place, which are to be understood of three years and a half, according to the prophetic stile, a day for a year; and seems intended for the comfort of the saints, that this most afflictive and distressed condition of the witnesses should last but for a little while. It is made a question, whether this war with the witnesses, and the slaughter of them, and their lying unburied, are over or no: some have thought that these things had their accomplishment in the council of Constance, held about the year 1414, and which lasted three years and a half exactly, when those two witnesses, John Hufs, and Jerom of Prague, were killed, insulted, and triumphed over by this council, which was made up of almost all nations. Brightman refers it to the Smalcaldic war in Germany in 1547, when the protestant army was beaten, and John Frederick, elector of Saxony, and Ernest, the son of the Lantgrave, and after that the Lantgrave himself, were taken prisoners; which was a grievous blow to the protestant cause, and occasioned great rejoicing in the popish party; but in the year 1550, just three years and a half after that defeat, the men of Magdeburgh rose up with great spirit and courage, and revived the cause. About this time was the council of Trent, to which also the same writer accommodates these things, which consisted of men of all nations, and continued three years and a half; when the authority of the scriptures was destroyed, which he supposes are the witnesses; when they were suppressed and silenced, and lay as a mere carcase, a dead letter, without any life in them: and it is easy to observe, that there have been several periods of time, in which there has been a seeming fulfilment of these things; the persecution under queen Mary, and the burning of the martyrs in her time, continued about three years and a half; the massacre in France in 1572, threatened an utter extirpation of the protestant religion there, which yet revived in 1576, much about the same space of time here mentioned; and there are several others that have been observed by writers; but what seems most remarkable of all, is the case of the protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, commonly called the Vaudois. The duke of Savoy, their sovereign, by an edict, dated January 31, 1685-6, N. S. forbade the exercise of their religion on pain of death, ordered their churches to be demolished, and their ministers to be banished; which was published in the valleys, April

11, and was put in execution on the 22d of the same month, by Savoy and French troops, who killed great numbers of them, took others, and put them into prisons, whom they released about the beginning of December, 1686, and suffered them to depart into other countries, where they were kindly received, relieved, and preserved, particularly by the kingdoms and states of England, Holland, Brandenburgh, Geneva, and Switzerland, while the popish party were rejoicing at their ruin: and toward the latter end of the year 1689, about three years and a half after the publishing of the edict, these people were inspired, on a sudden, with a spirit of resolution and courage; and, contrary to the advice of their friends, who thought their case desperate, secretly passed the lake of Geneva, and entered Savoy with sword in hand, and recovered their ancient possessions; and by the month April, A. D. 1690, established themselves in it, notwithstanding the troops of France and Savoy, to whom they were comparatively few, and whom they slew in great numbers, with little loss to themselves; when the duke perceiving they were encouraged and assisted by foreign princes, and he having left the French interest, re-called the rest of them, and re-established them by an edict, signed June 4, 1690, just three years and a half after their total dissipation, and gave leave to the French refugees to return with them. Now I take it, that these several things which have happened at certain times, in particular places, are so many hints and pledges of what hereafter will be universal to the witnesses in all places where they are. It would be very desirable if it could be ascertained, and concluded upon a good foundation, that this affair of the killing of the witnesses was over; but because of the following things it cannot be; for the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles, at least not the whole of it, which must be, ere they can come at the witnesses in the inner court to slay them: they have indeed attacked it, and have taken some part of it, as in Germany, Poland, &c. but as yet not in Great Britain, Holland, &c. at least not thoroughly, though it is plain they are getting ground. Moreover, the witnesses have not finished their testimony, they are still prophesying in sackcloth; whereas it will be when they have finished it, and towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that they will be killed: to which add, that the ruin of antichrist will quickly follow their rising and ascension; so that if any of the above instances had been the fulfilling of these things relating to the witnesses, antichrist must have been destroyed before now. And it may be further observed, that

that the second woe, which is the Turkish woe, will, upon the fulfilment of these things, pass away; and the third woe, or the sounding of the seventh trumpet, will immediately take place, which brings on the kingdom of Christ; whereas the Turkish government is still in being, and in great power; and there is no appearance, as yet, of the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ. There may be an allusion in this space of time, to the time that Antiochus, called Epiphanes, held Jerusalem in his hands, after he had conquered it, which was just three years and six months (s), during which time he spoiled the temple, and caused the daily sacrifice to cease: this term of time is much spoken of by the Jews; so long they say Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, and likewise Vespasian, and also three years and a half Adrian besieged Bithur (t).

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

And they that dwell upon the earth] Out of which the beast arose, and over which he reigns, even the inhabitants of the Roman empire, often in this book called the earth, the followers of antichrist, men that mind nothing but earth, and earthly things.

Shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another] As is usual with persons, and was with the Jews, to do in times of public rejoicing; see *Ester* ix. 18, 19. *Neb.* viii. 10, 11.

Because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth] Not because they were tormented by them, but because they were now freed from their tormenting ministry; they had tormented them by the preaching of the Gospel, which is foolishness, and the savour of death to natural men, and gives them pain, and fills them with vexation and wrath; by their testimony which they had bore for Christ, and against antichrist; by their sharp reproof of them for their false doctrine, and will-worship, and their impure lives and conversations; by their own holy lives, which would sometimes flash light into their consciences, and make them uneasy; and by their foretelling the calamities and ruin, tem-

poral and eternal, that would come upon them; but now they are silenced, and they hear and see no more of these things at which they rejoice.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

And after three days and an half] When it was certain they were dead, and all hope of reviving was over; see *John* xi. 39. that is, three years and a half.

The Spirit of life from God entered into them] See *Ezek.* i. 21. and chapter x. 17. This phrase is expressive of a resurrection. The Jews frequently call the general resurrection, *חיים*, "a quickening," and have the very phrase here used; for speaking of the resurrection, they say (u), *חיים*, "the spirit of life" does not dwell but in the holy land. This resurrection of the witnesses is not to be understood of a corporal resurrection; for there is no reason to believe that there will be a resurrection of any particular saints, until the general resurrection, which will be at the personal coming of Christ, and at the beginning of the thousand years, and after the sounding of the seventh trumpet; whereas this will be before that, and towards the close of the sixth trumpet: and besides, the death of these witnesses is not corporal, as has been observed: nor is a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace, intended, which is owing to the spirit of life from Christ; for these witnesses were such who had been quickened, and raised in this sense antecedent to their prophesying and killing; but a civil resurrection of them, or a resurrection of them, as witnesses, when their spirits will revive, and they will take heart and courage again to appear for Christ: and this may be understood of the same individual persons that were silenced, or of those that succeeded such that corporally died in the war of the beast, or during this interval; and so these witnesses may be said to rise in them, they appearing in the same spirit they did; just as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias: and this will be owing to the spirit of life from God, entering into them; which is said in allusion to the living soul of man, which returns to God, and at the resurrection, whether particular or general, comes from him, and re-enters the body; and which also is owing to the Spirit

(s) Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 1. §. 7. (t) Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 4. & 46. 3. & 48. 1. & 52. 21. & 58. 3. T. Hierof. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. Yalkut Simoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 1.

(u) Zechar. in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

Spirit of God, by whom mortal bodies will be quickened; and in allusion to the breathing on the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, *Ezek. xxxvii.* and the sense is, that the Spirit of God will inspire these witnesses with fresh life and vigour, zeal and resolution; so that though they have been so long silent, lifeless, and dispirited, they shall now rise in high spirits, and bravely exert themselves in the cause of Christ; and this will not be by any worldly power and authority, or by any secular arm, that shall encourage them, but by the Spirit of God, who shall breathe upon them, and afresh quicken them, and fill them with resolution and courage.

And they stood upon their feet] In great numbers, like the army in Ezekiel's vision; and will re-assume their former station, and be in a position, and a state of readiness to serve the Lord, and to defend his truths, and discharge their duty with boldness and courage, fearing the face of none.

And great fear fell upon them which saw them] In this posture; either on their enemies, who may fear that they should be tormented with them again; that the things which they had foretold concerning their ruin, are now coming upon them; that they shall be turned out of their places of profit, and lose all their worldly advantages, and carnal pleasures now, and be miserable to all eternity: or upon their friends either their false-hearted ones, that would not succour them when in distress, who may fear that God, whose finger they will see in this matter, will by them resent their conduct towards them; or else their real friends, who may be filled with reverence of the divine majesty, as the church was upon upon the business of Ananias and Sapphira, *Acts v. 11.*

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

And they heard a great voice from heaven] The Complutensian edition reads, "I heard," that is John; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; but the copies in general read *they*; not the enemies, but the witnesses: and this seems not to come from any christian civil magistrate in the church, but from Christ himself; not but that Christ may make use of such, for the bringing of his people into a more glorious and comfortable state in this world.

Saying unto them, Come up hither] As the angel said to John, chapter iv. 1. and Christ will say

to his people, though on another account, *Matt. xxv. 34.*

And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud] Which is to be understood not literally, for no man hath ascended to heaven, nor will any, until the thousand years are ended, when the saints will, in a body, ascend thither; but mystically, of a more glorious state of the church; so to ascend to heaven, signifies a more exalted state in a prince, or a kingdom, *Isaiah xiv. 13.* and here intends a state of comfortable communion of the saints one with another, of great purity and holiness, of large enjoyments of blessings and privileges, and of great security from enemies, and of great glory, and honour, and power, that shall be bestowed upon them; they now dwelling on high, and their place of defence being the munition of rocks. This will be the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ; and this ascension of the witnesses will be in a cloud, in allusion to our Lord's ascension to heaven, and as expressive of that glory and majesty which will be put upon these risen witnesses, and in which they shall enter into this happy state of things; or it may be, that this may denote that the first appearance of these happy times, and of Christ's spiritual reign in his church, and their more comfortable enjoyment, will be at first but dim and obscure, and yet such as in comparison of their former state, will be visible to, and be taken notice of, even by their very enemies.

And their enemies beheld them] Going up to heaven, or entering into a purer, and more glorious, and spiritual state; for the mountain of the Lord's house will be established upon the top of the mountains, and Jerusalem shall be made the praise of the whole earth, an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations; and this shall be seen and known of all, though to their grief and sorrow.

14 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

And the same hour was there a great earthquake] Or "the same day," as the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read; that is, at the time of the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses, as there was at the resurrection of Christ; and is to be understood of a very great commotion in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations within the Roman

Roman jurisdiction, as there was when Rome pagan was near its ruin, chapter vi. 12.

And the tenth part of the city fell] Mr Daubuz interprets *the earthquake* of the irruption of the Ottomans upon the Grecian empire, and the *tenth part* of the city, of the Greek church, and the falling of it, of its loss of liberty, and falling into slavery; but something yet to come is here intended. By *the city* is meant the city of Rome, the great city, mentioned in *ſ. 8.* and by *the tenth part* of it, may be designed either Rome itself, which as it now is, according to the observation of some, is but a tenth part of what it was once; so that the same thing is meant, as when it is said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen:” or it may design the tithes and profits which arise from the several kingdoms belonging to the jurisdiction and fee of Rome, which now will fall off from those who used to share them, upon this new and spiritual state of things; the Gospel daily gaining ground, and enlightening the minds of men, and freeing them from the slavery they were held in: or else the tenfold government of the Roman empire, or the ten kings that gave their kingdoms to the whore of Rome, and are the ten horns of the beast, on which she sits, who will now hate her, and burn her flesh with fire; or rather one of the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman western empire was divided. Dr Goodwin seems inclined to think, that Great Britain is intended, which having been gained over to the popish party, will now fall off again: but I rather think the kingdom of France is meant, the last of the ten kingdoms, which rose up out of the ruins of the Roman empire, which will be conquered, and which will be the means of its reformation from popery.

And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand] The meaning is, that in the commotions, massacres, tumults, and wars which will be throughout the empire, such a number of men will be slain; which is either put for a greater number, a certain for an uncertain, as in *Rom. xi. 4.* and perhaps in reference to the account there; otherwise seven thousand is but a small number to be slain in battle; or as it is in the original text, “the names of men seven thousand.” Now it is observed by some, that the smallest name of number belonging to men, is a centurion, or captain of an hundred men; and supposing that to be meant, then seven thousand names of men will imply, that in an hour, or about a fortnight’s time, may be slain throughout all Europe, in battles and massacres, about seven hundred thousand men, which is a very large number: or names of men may signify men of

VOL. V.

name, of great renown, as in *Numb. xvi. 2.* and then if seven thousand men of name, officers in armies, should be slain, how great must be the number of the common soldiers? Some have thought, that ecclesiastical dignities, or men distinguished by names and titles, such as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. and the whole rabble of the antichristian hierarchy, which will now fall, and be utterly demolished, are intended.

And the remnant were affrighted] Who were not slain in this earthquake; these will be affected with the judgments of God upon others, and be made sensible of their danger, and of their deliverance, which will so work upon them, as to reform them from popery.

And gave glory to the God of heaven] Will acknowledge the justice of God, and the righteousness of his judgments upon those that were slain, and his goodness to them, who are spared; will confess their transgressions and sins, they have been guilty of; and give the glory of their deliverance, not to their idols and images, but to the true God, whose religion they now embrace; for this respects the large conversions among the popish party, to the true religion, under the influence of the grace of God, through the preaching of the Gospel, which will now be spread throughout the world.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The second woe is past] Not in John’s time, only in a visionary way; the meaning is, that the second woe-trumpet, which is the sixth, will now have done sounding, when the four angels, bound in the river Euphrates, shall have been loosed, and they, with their horsemen, shall have done what they were designed to do; when the two witnesses shall have been slain, and are raised again, and ascended to heaven; and the things attending, or following thereon, as the earthquake, and slaughter, and the conversions of men, are accomplished.

And, behold, the third woe cometh quickly] Immediately, upon the passing of the other; namely, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as follows.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

4 A

And

And the seventh angel sounded] The last of the seven angels, who had trumpets given them to sound, chapter viii. 2, 6. The days of the voice of this angel, as in chapter x. 7. cannot refer to the times of Constantine; for though there was then a strange turn of affairs in favour of the kingdom of Christ, when there was a great spread of the Gospel, and large conversions in many places, and many churches were raised and formed in several countries, and the whole empire became christian; yet this, as we have seen, came to pass under the sixth seal, before any of the trumpets were sounded, and much less this seventh and last; nor do they belong to the times of the reformation in Germany. Brightman fixes the sounding of this trumpet to the year 1558, when the kings of Sweden and Denmark set up the Gospel in their kingdoms, and reformed them from popery; and when queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England, and rooted out great part of the Romish superstition: but it is certain, that this angel has not yet sounded his trumpet, and therefore cannot refer to any thing past, but to what is to come; we are yet under the sixth trumpet; the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles; the witnesses are not slain, and much less risen and ascended; the earthquake, the fall of the tenth part of the city, and the slaughter of seven thousand names of men, with what will follow thereon, are things yet to come; the Turkish woe is not over, and antichrist still reigns, and the kingdoms of this world are far from appearing to be the kingdoms of Christ. Some think, and indeed the generality of interpreters, that this respects the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, the last trump, which will sound at the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment; but none of these appear in the account of things under this trumpet; but rather the whole has a view to the spiritual reign of Christ, when both the eastern and western antichrist will be destroyed; the Gospel will be carried all over the world, and there will be large conversions both among Jews and Gentiles, and Christ will reign in a spiritual manner over all the earth. Hence it follows,

And there were great voices in heaven] These are either the voices of the angels in heaven, who rejoice at every appearance, and breaking forth of Christ's kingdom and glory, as in chapters v. 11, 12. and vii. 11, 12. and indeed, if they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, at a single addition to Christ's interest, then much more will they, when the kingdoms of this world become his; or rather these may be the voices of the multitude of the saints in the churches, the same

company with those in chapter xix. 1—7. who express their joy at the judgment of the great whore, and at the marriage of the Lamb; and who, as here, are attended with the thanksgivings and hallelujahs of the four and twenty elders: and it may be, that these are also the voices of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, since the four and twenty elders generally follow them, chapters iv. 9, 10. and v. 14. they may be the witnesses, who were silenced, but are now raised up, and are ascended into heaven, and their mouths are opened, and their voices heard again.

Saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ] By the kingdoms of this world are meant, worldly kingdoms, which are set up by worldly power, and are supported by worldly policy, and subsist upon worldly principles and maxims; the government of which proceeds upon worldly ends and views; in distinction from the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, and is not supported by any such methods; and they are the kingdoms, into which the world is divided, which, and the glory of them, Satan showed to Christ, and insolently offered to give him them, if he would worship him; but these were to come to Christ in another way, and at another time. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read in the singular number, "the kingdom of this world;" the whole government of it, which is his by right of nature, and will be overturned, and overturned again and again, till he comes, whose right it is: and then all power, rule, and authority will be put down, and his kingdom, which will fill the face of the whole earth, will take place: all the antichristian states and kingdoms are here intended, particularly the kingdoms, into which the Roman empire sometimes called the whole world, *Luke* ii. 1. is divided, which are ten; one of the ten, a tenth part of the city or jurisdiction of Rome will fall at the close of the sixth trumpet, and the other nine, or the other nine parts, will fall at the sounding of the seventh; the ten kings that have given their kingdoms to the beast, will have an aversion to the whore, hate her, and burn her flesh, will fall off from her, and into the hands of Christ; there will be a general and thorough reformation from popery in all the kingdoms of the Roman empire: but though these are greatly intended, yet not only they, but the Mahometan nations also, as the Turkish woe will now be over, and the great river Euphrates dried up, to make way for the kings of the east, those large kingdoms, and countries

countries of China, Tartary, and Persia; and these now under the power of the Turk, will embrace the christian faith; and also all the pagan nations are to be taken into the account, and who will now enjoy the light of the Gospel: and all, and every one of those pagan, papal, and Mahometan kingdoms, will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; by our Lord may be designed God the Father, who is the Lord of the whole earth, the Lord God Almighty, and is acknowledged as such by angels and men; and by his Christ, his Son Jesus Christ, who is equal with him; and what belongs to the one, belongs to the other; and who, as mediator, is his anointed one; anointed to be prophet, priest, and king; anointed with the oil of gladness, the holy Ghost; see Psalm ii. 2. where the same distinction is. In the Targum on Isaiah iv. 2. mention is made of, משיחא, "the Messiah," or "Christ of Jehovah:" and in the same Targum on Isaiah liii. 10. it is said, "they shall look, משיחא, "upon the kingdom of their Messiah;" though it may be rather that Christ is designed by both these phrases, and the words be rendered, "our Lord, even his Christ;" since the phrase, "our Lord," as well as Christ, is generally understood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament; and who is Lord of all, of angels, and of men, and the Christ of God. Now these kingdoms will become his, not merely by right, for so they are his already, by right of nature, and creation, and preservation; but these have shaken off his government, and have refused to have him to reign over them, and have fallen into the hands of usurpers, as Satan, the god of this world, the Romish antichrist, that reigns over the kings of the earth, and Mahomet the king of the locusts; but now these will, in fact, come into his hands, and be under his government; they will acknowledge him as their Lord and sovereign, and fear and worship him, as king of saints: and this will be brought about, not by force of arms, as Mahomet got his dominions; nor by policy and fraud, by imposture and lying wonders, by which the pope of Rome has obtained his authority, over the nations; but partly by the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon the seat of the beast, and upon the river Euphrates, that is, both upon the Pope and Turk, which will weaken and destroy their power and authority, and make way for Christ to set up his kingdom; and partly, and chiefly, by the preaching of the Gospel: now will an open door be set, which none can shut; many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased; the earth will be covered with it, as the sea with waters; multitudes of souls every

where will be converted; a nation will be born at once; churches will be set up in every place, which are Christ's kingdom, where he reigns, and where his subjects are, and his laws are put in execution; where his word will be now faithfully preached, his ordinances purely administered, and he in his person, office, and grace, will be alone exalted: the consequence of which will be,

And he shall reign for ever and ever] No usurper will ever start up more, or obtain; neither Satan, nor the beast, nor the false prophet, shall ever regain their power and authority any more; neither paganism, nor judaism, nor antichristianism, either papal or Mahometan shall ever have place more; Christ will reign in this spiritual way, more or less, until he comes personally, and then he will reign with his people on earth a thousand years; and when they are ended, he will reign with them in heaven to all eternity; for though at the end of these years, he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, yet he will not cease to reign; indeed he will not reign in the same manner, but he will reign with equal power and authority, and over, and with the same persons. The Vulgate Latin version adds, *Amen*.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

And the four and twenty elders] The same with those in chapter iv. 4.

Which sat before God on their seats] As they are also there described; and which may be expressive of their enjoyment of the divine presence; and also of their quiet and undisturbed situation, being restored to their former places, which they now possess without molestation and interruption; for as these are the representatives of Gospel churches in all ages, they were with the church in the wilderness during the 1260 days, or years: hence we hear nothing of them from the time of the sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand, and during the sounding of the trumpets; but now they are restored to their former seats, and upon this wonderful change of things in the world, they

Fell upon their faces, and worshipped God] In a very humble and reverential posture, and in a way of praise and thanksgiving.

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty] The person addressed is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose the kingdoms are become, and who now reigns in great power and authority; he is Lord of all, and truly and properly God, and the Almighty, as his works of creation, preservation, redemption, raising himself from the dead, &c. declare; and each of these titles exceedingly well suit him, when his visible kingdom on earth will be so greatly enlarged.

Which art, and wast, and art to come] The everlasting *I am*, the unchangeable *Jehovah*: the phrase is expressive of the eternity and immutability of Christ; see the note on chap. i. 8. and it may be observed, that whereas in this description of him, it is said, *and art to come*, this therefore does not belong to his personal, but to his spiritual reign; he will not be as yet come in person, to raise the dead, and judge the world, when these voices shall be in heaven, and these congratulations of the elders be made: the reason of their praise and thanksgiving follows,

Because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned] Power always belonged to him, as God; he always was the mighty God, and as such, help for his people was laid upon him, he being mighty to save, and able to bear the government of them, laid on his shoulders; and as mediator, all power in heaven, and in earth, was given to him at his resurrection; and he had a name given him above every name, when exalted at the right hand of God, and was made, or declared, Lord and Christ; and from that time he has, in some measure, exerted his power and reigned: he endued his apostles with power from on high; and he went forth in the ministry of the Gospel conquering, and to conquer; and has ever since reigned in the hearts of his people; but now he will manifest and display his *great* power; he will show it more openly, and use it more extensively; his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; he shall be king over all the earth; his power has been seen in ages past, but now the *greatness* of his power will be made manifest; he has always had a kingdom on earth, but now the *greatness* of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, will be his.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and

shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

And the nations were angry] See *Psalms* xcix. 1. which the Septuagint render, the "Lord reigns, let the nations be angry." This refers not to the times of the dragon, or the pagan Roman emperors, who were wroth with the woman, the church, and made war with her seed; but Rome papal, and its Gentiles, are intended; these are the nations, that antichrist reigns over: and it does not so much design their anger against Christ, and his people, expressed by their anathemas, excommunications, murders, and massacres, and bloody persecutions, which could not be cause of thanksgiving to the elders; but their anger and resentment at his power and reign, at having the outward court taken from them, said to be given them, *ys. 2.* and at their loss of power, profit, pleasure, and plenty, through the fall of Babylon, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; and tho' these things will make the Gentiles, the followers of antichrist, gnash their teeth, it will occasion joy and thanksgiving among the saints.

And thy wrath is come] The time is come to make Babylon, or the Romish antichrist, to drink of the wine of the fierceness of divine wrath; as the time of the Lamb's wrath and vengeance upon Rome pagan, was come, at the opening of the sixth seal; so the time of his wrath and vengeance on Rome papal will be come at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

And the time of the dead, that they should be judged] Not the time of the wicked, who are dead in sins, while they live, and who die in their sins, not their time to be raised from the dead, in order to be judged, for they will not rise till after the thousand years are ended; nor the time of the dead in Christ, who will rise upon Christ's personal coming, at the beginning of the thousand years; but this trumpet respects not the personal coming of Christ to raise the dead, and judge the world, but his spiritual coming to reign in his churches, and judge their enemies: the time of those that were dead for Christ, whose blood had been shed in his cause, the time for the vindication of them, and avenging their blood is now come; the souls of those under the altar had been a long time crying to God to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and now the time will be come, when God will judge his people, vindicate their cause; and when he, to whom vengeance belongs, will repay it, by pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian party, by giving them blood to drink, because they are worthy; this judgment will issue in the fall and ruin, both of the western and eastern antichrist.

And

And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants] Not a reward of debt, but of grace; not the recompence of reward, or the reward of the inheritance in heaven; but some marks of honour and respect; some measure of happiness, peace, and joy, which Christ of his rich grace will give to his ministers, and churches, and all that love him in this glorious period of time: and who are distinguished in the following manner,

The prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great] By the *prophets* are meant, not the prophets of the Old Testament, but the prophets of the New; and not those extraordinary persons, who are distinguished on the one hand from apostles and evangelists, and on the other from pastors and teachers, who had an extraordinary gift of interpreting the scriptures, and of foretelling things to come; but the ministers of the word, the two prophets or witnesses, who had prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now be clothed with salvation: and by *the saints* are designed, such as were set apart by God the Father from eternity, and whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and externally separated from the rest of mankind, and incorporated into a Gospel church-state, and are in holy fellowship one with another: and they that "fear the name" of God, are such as truly love and reverence him, and worship him in spirit and in truth, but are not members of any particular church; who yet will be taken notice of by the Lord, and a book of remembrance be written for them; so the proselytes from among the Gentiles are distinguished from the Israelites by the same character; see the note on *Acts* xiii. 26. or rather this is a general character of both ministers and churches, since to fear the name of the Lord, is a phrase that includes all religious worship, internal and external. And now all these, *small and great*, whether greater or lesser believers, whether men of larger, or meaner gifts and abilities, will all have the same reward, enjoy the same church privileges, partake of the same ordinances, in the purity of them, have the same communion with God, and fellowship with Christ, and one another, and share in the same common peace, and liberty, and security from enemies: the last thing taken notice of by these elders, as matter of thanksgiving, is the destruction of antichrist.

And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth] Or "corrupt it;" meaning antichrist and his followers; who destroy the bodies, souls, and estates of men, and not only the inhabitants of the earth, but even the earth itself; for through that laziness

and idleness which they spread wherever they come, a fruitful country is turned into barrenness; who corrupt the minds of men, with false doctrine, idolatry, and superstition, and the bodies of women and men with all uncleanness and filthiness, with fornication, sodomy, &c. chap. xix. 2. and are the cause of their own destruction, and the destruction of others; which, upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, will come swiftly and irrecoverably. Now will Babylon sink as a millstone into the sea, never to be seen more; both the western and eastern antichrists are intended; the former is called the son of perdition, because of his destroying others, and going into perdition himself; and the latter is called Abaddon, and Apollyon, which both signify a destroyer, *2 Thess.* ii. 4. *Rev.* ix. 11.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven] The temple at Jerusalem, to which the allusion is, was the place of public worship; this, in times of idolatry, was shut up, and fell to decay; and when there was a reformation its doors were opened, and that repaired; and to this the reference seems to be; and the sense is, that at this time the pure worship of God will be restored, and there will be a free and uninterrupted exercise of it; the temple will be open to all; here every one may come, and sit, and worship, without fear; churches will now be formed according to the original plan, and primitive order and institution of them; the laws of Christ concerning the admission, regulation, and exclusion of members, will be carefully and punctually observed; the ordinances of Christ will be kept, as they were first delivered, and be purged from all the corruptions introduced by papists, or retained by protestants; the ordinance of the Lord's supper will be freed from the senseless notions of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, and from all vain and impertinent rites and ceremonies, that attend it; and the ordinance of baptism will be administered, both as to mode and subject, according to the word of God, as well as be cleared from the superstitious rites of the sign of the cross, chrism, spittle, &c. in short, all external worship will be pure, plain, and evangelical: hence it appears, that by this temple is not meant the church triumphant, and the happiness of the saints in heaven, as becoming visible, nor even the new Jerusalem.

Jerusalem church-state, or the personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years; for in that state there will be no temple at all, nor will the saints then need the sun, or moon of Gospel ordinances, chapter xxi. 22, 23.

And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament] The ark was a chest, in which the covenant or tables of the law were put; upon it was the mercy seat, and over that the cherubim of glory, shadowing it; between which were the seat of the divine majesty: this ark stood in the holy of holies, and was seen only by the high priest once a year, and was covered with a covering vail, *Numb. iv. 5.* it was wanting in the second temple (*w*); to this the allusion is here; see the note on *Heb. ix. 4.* Now in this spiritual Gospel church-state, through the pure ministry of the word, and the faithful administration of ordinances, the mysteries of the Gospel, into which angels desire to look, signified by the cherubim over the mercy-seat, will be clearly revealed, to all christians, Jews and Gentiles; particularly to the former, from whom they have been hid; the vail that is over their hearts will then be done away, when they shall be turned to the Lord; and indeed, the vail which is over all people, will then be removed; and those truths which have been so much obscured by antichrist, will be clearly seen; and especially the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of the ark, in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom; by whom the law, and the two tables of it, are fulfilled; and in whom they are pure and perfect; and by whom the covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed; and in whom it is sure; and through whom God is propitious to his people, and grants them communion with him; he will be visibly held forth in the ministry of the word; and be seen in the glory of his person, and offices, and grace; who has been so long and greatly hid, and kept out of sight, by Popish and Mahometan darkness.

And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail] Which may be understood of the vials of God's wrath, that will be poured out upon the Pope and Turk; which though mentioned last, will be first, and make way for this spiritual state; particularly the things here spoken of, may be compared with what will be at the pouring out of the seventh vial, chapter xvi. 18, 21. or this may design the powerful voices, and clear ministrations of the Gospel, and the efficacy of them at this time; which, like thunders, will awaken the consciences of men; and, like earthquakes, will make them shake and

tremble, and cry out, What shall we do to be saved? and as *lightnings* illuminate their understandings, and give them a clear discerning of divine things; and as *hail* beat down all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and all errors, heresies, superstition, and will-worship. Though I suspect, that these several things are expressive of the change and revolution, that will be made, after a time, in this happy and comfortable state; and that the cold, which generally attends an hail storm, represents that coldness and lukewarmness into which the churches of Christ will again sink, expressed in the Laodicean church-state, in which condition Christ will find them when he personally appears; so that the seven seals, with the seven trumpets, bring us exactly to the same period of time, as the seven churches do.

CHAP. XII.

This chapter contains a vision of two wonders or signs seen in heaven, a woman and a dragon, and an account of what followed thereon, war both in heaven and earth. The vision of the woman is in *ch. 1, 2.* who is described by her being clothed with the sun; by her having the moon under her feet; by a crown of twelve stars on her head; and by her pregnancy, travail, pains, and cry. The vision of the dragon is in *ch. 3, 4.* who is described by his bigness, a great one; by his colour, red; by the number of his heads and horns, and the crowns on the former; by the force and strength of his tail, drawing and casting down to the earth the third part of the stars of heaven; and by his position, standing before the woman, in order to devour her child when born. Next follows an account of the birth of her child, and what became of that, and her: the child is said to be a man-child, is described as a monarch, and as advanced to great honour and dignity; but she flies into the wilderness, where a place is prepared for her of God, and where she is hid for the space of 1260 days, *ch. 5, 6.* upon this ensues a war in heaven; the combatants on one side were Michael and his angels, and on the other the dragon and his; the issue of which was, that the latter were conquered, and cast out into the earth, *ch. 7—9.* on account of which victory a triumphant song is sung by the inhabitants of heaven, because of salvation and strength that were come to them; and because of the kingdom and power of Christ, which now took place; and because of the ejection of Satan, the accuser of their brethren; in which song also notice is taken of the manner in which Satan was overcome by those he accused,

(w) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21, 2. See 1 Esdras, i. 54. 2 Maccab. ii. 4, 5.

by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by their death: and it is concluded with an apostrophe to those that dwell in heaven, calling on them to rejoice, and to the inhabitants of the earth denouncing woe to them, because the devil was among them, whose wrath was great, his time being short, *ŷ. 10—12.* Next follow the dragon's persecution of the woman, and her flight into the wilderness, and the care took of her there, as before described, *ŷ. 13, 14.* then the method the serpent took to annoy her, the help she received from the earth, and the wrath of the dragon upon that; which put him upon making war with the remnant of her seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus, *ŷ. 15—17.*

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven] This vision begins a new account of things, and represents the church in the apostles times, and purer ages of christianity, and under the heathen and Arian persecutions; after which an account is given of the beast, mentioned in chapter xi. 7. of his rise, power, and reign, and then of the victories of the saints over him; and of the vials of God's wrath upon him, and of his utter ruin and destruction; when comes on the marriage of the Lamb, and after that the first resurrection, and the thousand years reign; and the whole is closed with a most beautiful description of the new Jerusalem state, which is the grand point and utmost period this prophetic book leads unto. This vision was seen *in heaven*, whither John was called up to, chapter iv. 1. and where the various scenes in a visionary way, were acted, both before, and after this; and which was an emblem of the state of the church on earth: what was seen is called a *wonder*, or *sign*, it being very amazing to behold, and very significative of persons and things; and a *great* one, because it respects great affairs, and wonderful events relating to the state of the church in future times, as well as present: and the first thing seen and observed was

A woman] By whom is meant, not the virgin Mary, as highly favoured of God, and big with her first-born son Jesus; though there may be an allusion to her, and in some things there is a likeness, as is by some observed; as Mary brought forth Christ corporally, and God in the fulness of time sent forth his Son, made of a woman, so

this woman brings forth Christ spiritually, or the manly birth of his kingdom in the world, or one that should be the instrument of enlarging his kingdom; and as Herod sought to destroy Christ in his infancy, and as soon as born, so the dragon here stands watching to destroy the manly birth as soon as brought forth; and as Joseph, with Mary, and her son, by a divine direction, fled into Egypt, where they continued during the reign of Herod, so to this woman are given two wings of an eagle, to flee into the wilderness, where she abides, and is nourished, during the reign of antichrist; and as Herod, after the flight of Mary, killed all the infants of Bethlehem, of two years of age, and under, that he might destroy her son, so the dragon casts out a flood of water after the woman, to carry her away, and makes war with the remnant of her seed; and as the son of Mary, after he had done his work, was taken up to heaven, and made Lord and Christ, so the man-child, this woman brings forth, is caught up to God, and his throne, to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But Mary, and the birth of Christ, can never be intended in this vision, that affair being past and over, and would never be represented to John in this manner, who was well acquainted with it: nor is the church of God, among the Jews, of the former dispensation, designed; who were highly honoured of God, on whom he shone forth at the giving of the law to them; who had his word and ordinances, to be a light unto them, and had the priests and prophets of the Lord among them; and whose crown and glory it was to descend from the twelve patriarchs; and who were in great expectation of, and most earnestly desired, and longed for, and were, as it were, in pain for the coming of the Messiah; but to what purpose could such a representation of them be made to John now? much less is the church of the Jews, or the Jewish synagogue, as it was at the coming and birth of Christ, here designed, which was an evil, wicked, and adulterous generation, and so bad as not to be declared by the tongue and pen of man, and therefore far from answering the description here; but the pure apostolic church is meant, or the church of Christ, as it was in the times of the apostles, and the first ages of christianity: the description answers to the first of the seven churches, the church at Ephesus, and to the opening of the first seal; and the church apostolical is here called a *woman*, because the church was not now in its infancy, in nonage, as under the former dispensation, but grown up, mature, and at full age; and because espoused and married to Christ her husband, to whom she now brought forth many children, in a spiritual sense, as she hereafter:

hereafter will bring forth many more; and because of her beauty in the eyes of her lord and husband, which is greatly desired, and highly commended by him; as also because of her weakness in herself, her ministers and members, not being able to do any thing without her husband, Christ, through whom she can do all things. And who is further described by her habit and attire,

Clothed with the sun] Which does not point at her future state in glory; see *Matt.* xiii. 47. but to her then present state on earth; and is expressive of that clear light of Gospel doctrine, which shone out upon her, like the sun in its meridian glory, and of the heat of love to God, Christ, and his people, and zeal for his truths, ordinances, worship, and discipline which appeared in her; and of that inward holiness of heart which made her all glorious within; and of the outward purity of life and conversation, which greatly adorned her; but above all, of the righteousness of Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, and the Lord her righteousness; which righteousness, as it was doctrinally held forth by her in the clearest manner, was also as a garment on her, to cover, preserve, and beautify her; and is comparable to the sun for its glory and excellency, out-shining that of angels and men; and for its spotless purity, being without any blemish or deficiency; and for its perpetuity, being an everlasting one, and even exceeding the sun in duration.

And the moon under her feet] The church is sometimes compared to the moon herself, because as the moon receives its light from the sun, so she receives her light from Christ; and as the moon often changes, and has its various phases and appearances, so the church sometimes is in the exercise of grace, and sometimes not; sometimes under trials and persecutions, and at other times in rest and peace; one while retaining the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel in their power and purity, and anon almost over-run with errors and superstition; but this cannot be the sense here. The common interpretation is, that it signifies the church's contempt of, and trampling upon all worldly things, which are changeable, perishing, and passing away; and which very well suits with the primitive saints, who did not set their affections on things in earth, but on things in heaven, who sold their worldly possessions, and laid them at the apostles feet. Brightman thinks, that as the moon is a luminary, it may denote the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet, and a lantern to her paths, by which her discipline and public worship were directed, and all the private actions of life were

squared; which is no contemptible sense of the words: but I rather think the ceremonial law is intended, which is very fitly represented by the moon; it consisted much in the observation of new moons, and its solemn festivals were governed and regulated by them; see *2 Chron.* viii. 12, 13. *Isaiah* i. 13. *Amos* viii. 5. There was some light in it, and it gave light to the saints in the night of Jewish darkness; it pointed out Christ to them, and was their school-master to teach and lead them to him; yet like the moon, it was the lesser light, the light it gave was inferior to that which the Gospel now gives; and as the moon has its spots, so had that its imperfections; had it been faultless, there had been no need of another, and a new dispensation, but that could make nothing perfect; and as the moon, it was variable and changeable; it was but for a time, and is now done away; it is not only waxen old, like the moon in the wain, but is entirely vanished away; and yet, though it was abolished by the death of Christ, it was kept up and maintained by many of the Jews, even of them that believed; persons are naturally fond of ceremonies; and many had rather part with a doctrine of the Gospel, than with an old custom, or an useless ceremony; and this was, in a great measure, the case of the Jews; see *Acts* xxi. 20. so that it was one of the greatest difficulties the christian church had to grapple with, to get the ceremonial law under foot; for though it was under the feet of Christ, it was a long time ere it was under the feet of the church; and a wonder it was when it was accomplished. Mr Daubuz has given a new interpretation of this clause; and by *the moon* he understands the holy Ghost, the governor of the church, next to Christ, his successor and vicar, and the minister of him, the sun of righteousness; who is said to be under the feet of the church, to assist her in her labour, and in the bringing forth of her man-child; and to support and sustain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways.

And upon her head a crown of twelve stars] By *stars* are meant the ministers of the Gospel, which Christ holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head, chapter i. 20. And these twelve have respect to the twelve apostles of Christ; and the crown, which was composed of these stars, designs the doctrine which they preached; and this being on her head, shows that it was in the beginning of this church-state that the pure apostolic doctrine was embraced, professed, and held forth; for in the latter part of it there was a great decline, and falling off from it; in the times of the apostle Paul, the mystery of iniquity began to work; and in John's time many anti-christs

Christ was come into the world: and also this signifies, that the church openly owned the doctrine of the apostles, and was not ashamed of it before men, and publicly preached, and held it forth in her ministers, to all the world: and that this was her crown and glory, so long as she held it in its power, purity, and was both what she gloried in, and was a glory, an ornament to her: and this was also an emblem of her victory over her enemies, and of her future happiness, and pointed at the means of both; that it was by a faithful and stedfast adherence to the doctrine of the apostles, that she overcame Satan, and all her spiritual enemies and came to the possession of the crown of life and glory.

2 And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered.

And she being with child] Which may be expressive of the fruitfulness of the church in bearing and bringing forth many souls to Christ, and which were very numerous in this period of time, when it was said of Zion that this and that man was born in her; and particularly of her pregnancy with the kingdom of Christ, to be brought forth, and set up in the Roman empire, under the influence of a Roman emperor: and this being her case, she

Cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered] Which are metaphors taken from a woman in travail; and may either denote the earnest cries and fervent prayers of the members of the church, and the laborious and painful ministrations of the preachers of the Gospel for the conversion of souls, and especially for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the empire of Rome; or else the sore and grievous persecutions which attended the apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word, throughout the times of the ten Roman emperors, and especially under Dioclesian; when the church was big, and laboured in great pain, and the time was drawing on apace that a christian emperor should be brought forth, who should be a means of spreading the Gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, all over the empire; see *Jer.* xxx. 6, 7. *Matt.* xxiv. 8. so the Targumist frequently explains the pains of a woman in travail in the prophets by *תסוק*, "tribulation;" see the Targum on *Isaiah* xlii. 8. chapters xxvi. 18. and lxvi. 7.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon,

having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven] Or *sign*; which represents the woman, or the church's adversary, Satan; not that he was in heaven, in the third heaven, the place of glory and happiness, for out of that he had been cast long ago; but in his great power and authority here on earth, particularly in the Roman empire, where the church was labouring to bring forth her man child.

And behold a great red dragon] The devil, as it is explained in *1. 9.* though not he in person, but the heathen Roman empire, or the heathen Roman emperors, acted, influenced, directed, and presided over by him; so Pharaoh king of Egypt, and other cruel and persecuting monarchs and states are called dragons in scripture, *Isaiah* xxvii. 1. and chapter li. 9. *Ezek.* xxix. 3. all which places the Targum interprets of *מלכות*, a king, and particularly of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who is like to a great and mighty dragon: and the Roman pagan empire, as under the influence of Satan, the god of this world, is fitly compared to a dragon, for its policy and cunning in circumventing and ensnaring the professors of christianity; and for its cruelty and inhumanity in persecuting of them; and for its poison of idolatry, will-worship, and superstition: and it may be called a great one, for its strength and power, which lay in its immense treasure and riches, in numbers of men, in powerful armies, in strong cities, castles, &c. and for its large extent and jurisdiction; and a red one, because of the blood of the saints shed in it, by which it became of this colour; suitable to the character and bloody practices of the old serpent the devil, by whom it was influenced, who was a murderer from the beginning; and agreeable to one of the names by which the Jews (*x*) frequently call the Roman empire, Edom, the name Esau had from the red pottage he sold his birth-right for, and who himself was born red, *Gen.* xxv. 29, 30. it seems there were red dragons; Homer (*y*) says of the dragon, that it is red upon its back.

Having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads] The seven heads of the Roman empire, either design the seven mountains, or hills, on which Rome, the metropolis of the empire, was built, as the seven heads of the beast on which the woman drunk with the blood of the saints

(x) Vid. Buxtorf, Lex. Rab. in voce *עֶדְוִם*.
l. 308.

(y) *Iliad* 3.

saints sat, are explained in chapter xvii. 9. or rather the seven forms of government which successively should obtain in the empire, as kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, tribunes, emperors, and popes; hence these heads are said to have seven crowns upon them, as expressive of the imperial power and dignity which were in them, and exercised by them: Mr Daubuz thinks seven capital cities in the Roman empire are meant, as Rome, Carthage, Æge, Antiochia, Augustodunum, Alexandria, and Constantinople; and nothing is more common than to call chief cities the heads of the countries they belong unto, as Damascus the head of Syria, and Samaria the head of Ephraim, *Isaiah* vii. 8, 9. Pliny (z) calls Babylon the head of Chaldea; and Cornelius Nepos says (a) of Thebes, that it was the head of all Greece; and Syracuse is by Florus (b) called the head of Sicily, as Rome is in Livy (c), and other writers, the head of the world: and by the ten horns are meant either the ten kingdoms which should hereafter arise out of the Roman empire, and whose kings should give their kingdoms to the beast; or the ten Roman emperors, the persecutors of the christians; or rather the ten provinces, or jurisdictions, which the empire was divided into whilst pagan: Brightman out of Strabo has shewn, than in the times of Augustus Cesar the Roman empire was distributed into two parts, the one was more immediately under the care of the emperor, and the other was governed by deputies; and each were divided into ten provinces; that which the emperor held consisted of Africa, France, Britain, Germany, Dacia with Mysia and Thracia, Cappadocia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine with Judea and Egypt, in all ten; and that part which was governed by deputies, were the outermost Spain, and the isles by it, the innermost Spain, &c. Sardinia with Corsica, Sicily, Illyricum with Epirus, Macedonia, Achaia, Crete with Cyreniaca, Cyprus, Bithynia with Propontis; so that the Roman pagan empire, as under the dominion of Satan is manifestly designed by the dragon thus described. The Jews (d) speak of ten horns which the Israelites had, which when they sinned were taken from them, as it is written, *Lam.* ii. 3. and were given to the nations of the world, according to *Dan.* vii. 20. and of the ten horns that were in his head, &c.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to

the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth] So Solinus (e) speaks of dragons that have power not only in their teeth, but in their tails, and do more hurt by striking than by biting; and the great serpent which Attilius Regulus and his army fought with, not only destroyed many of his soldiers with its vast mouth, but dashed many to pieces with its tail (f); which serpent, Pliny (g) says, was a hundred and twenty foot long: this is said in allusion to Antiochus Epiphanes, in *Dan.* viii. 10. and designs either the subduing of the third part of the principalities, states, and kingdoms of the known world, to the Roman empire, through its great power and strength; which lay in its tail, in its train of armies, which attended it, whereby such a number of nations were drawn into subjection to it, insomuch that the empire was called all the world, *Luke* ii. 1. or else the influence the dragon should have upon the ministers of the word, who are compared to stars, chapter i. 20. by causing them to relinquish their ministry, and drop their heavenly employment, and fall from that high and honourable state in which they were, into a carnal, earthly, and worldly religion; and that either through policy, cunning, and flattery, or through sorcery, magic art, lying oracles and prophesy; see *Isaiah* ix. 15. or through the violence of persecution, they had not power to withstand; of which falling stars there are many instances, as the ecclesiastical histories of those times shew.

And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born] Just as the dragon Pharaoh lay in the midst of his rivers, in the river Nile, *Ezekiel* xxix. 3. to slay the male children of Israel, as as soon as born; and as the dragon Herod sought to take away the life of Jesus quickly after his birth; and as Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, so the pagan empire, or the pagan emperors, took every opportunity to stifle the kingdom of Christ in embryo, and to prevent the bringing forth of any illustrious person; and sought to destroy him as soon as he appeared, who might be thought, or suspected to be an instrument of encouraging and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the empire: the instances

Bright-

(a) Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 26. (e) In vita Epaminond. l. 15. c. 20.

(b) Hist. Rom. l. 2. c. 6.

(c) Hist. l. 21. c. 30.

(d) Eccl. Rabbati, fol. 53. 2, 3.

(e) Polyhist. c. 43.

(f) Valer. Maxim. l. 2. c. 8.

(g) Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 4.

Brightman produces are apposite, and to the purpose; as of Maximinus destroying Alexander the son of Mamea, who he saw was inclined to the christians; and of Decius taking off the two Phillips, father and son, who were favourable to their cause; but especially the watchfulness of the dragon to destroy the man-child was very manifest in the Roman emperors towards Constantine; Dioclesian and Galerius observing his virtuous disposition in his youth, left nothing unattempted to cut him off privately; he was sent against the Sarmatians, a cruel and savage people, in hopes he would have been destroyed by them; and was set to fight with a lion in the theatre, under a pretence of exercising and shewing his valour; and many other methods were used to take away his life, but none succeeded.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And she brought forth a man child] Not Christ literally and personally considered, or Christ in his human nature, as made of a woman, and born of a virgin, which was a fact that had been years ago; but Christ mystical, or Christ in his members, who are called by his name, because he is formed in them, and they are the seed of the woman, the church; and many of these were brought forth to Christ by the church in the primitive times, who were a manly birth, hale, strong, and robust christians; or rather this manly birth may design a more glorious appearing and breaking forth of the kingdom of Christ in the Roman empire; for though Christ came as a king, yet his kingdom was not with observation in the days of his flesh; and though upon his ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ, and had a kingdom and interest in the world, and even in the Roman empire, during the first three centuries, yet this was attended with the cross and persecution; but now towards the close of that period, Constantine, a christian emperor, was born, under whose influence and encouragement the Gospel was spread, and the kingdom of Christ set up, and established in the empire; and this seems to be the thing intended here, he being of a generous, heroic, and manly disposition.

Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron] This has a manifest reference to *Psalms* ii. 9. which psalm, and the passage referred to in it, evidently belong to Christ; and as this represented as something future, what should be hereafter,

and not what would immediately take place, it may regard the kingdom of Christ in the last times, of which the present breaking forth of it in Constantine's time, was an emblem and pledge; and may denote the universality of it, it reaching to all the kingdoms of the world, and the manner in which Christ will rule, especially over his enemies, antichrist and his followers, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and break in pieces with his rod of iron, and order all that would not have him to reign over them, slain before him; and as this may be applied to Christ mystical, the seed of the church, and members of Christ, as it is in *Rev.* ii. 26, 27. it may relate to their reign with Christ on earth, when they shall sit on thrones, and judge the world, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them; but since this is expressly said of the man child in the text, it may be expressive even of the temporal government of Constantine, who was an heroic and victorious prince, and extended his dominions to the several parts of the world; as far as Britain to the west, and all Scythia to the north, Ethiopia to the south, and the remote parts of India to the east, even to the ultimate parts of the whole world, as Eusebius (b) affirms, making his kingdom to be three times larger than that of Alexander the Great: and more especially it may describe the kingdom of Christ in his times; which was spread throughout all the nations of the empire; when paganism was demolished, both in the continent and in the isles of the sea, and the strong holds of Satan were pulled down, not by carnal, but spiritual weapons; when multitudes of souls were converted by the word, the rod of Christ's strength, and when the saints were guided, directed, fed, and comforted by it; for the allusion seems to be to the shepherd's rod, with which he leads and feeds his sheep; the same word signifies both to rule and feed.

And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne] Which is to be understood not of Christ's ascent to heaven in human nature, when he was set down on the same throne with his Father; nor of Christ mystical, or of the saints being caught up into the air, to meet the Lord, and be for ever with him, and sit down with him on the same throne; but rather of some glorious advance of the church and kingdom of Christ on earth; for as to fall from heaven is expressive of debasement and meanness, and of a low estate that a person is brought into, *Isaiah* xiv. 12. so an ascending

(b) De vita Constantini, l. i. c. 8.

cending up to heaven, as the two witnesses in the preceding chapter are said to do, denotes exaltation, or a rise to some more glorious state and condition, which was the case of the church in Constantine's time: and this may also take in the accession of Constantine himself the imperial throne, which was the throne of God; for kings have their sceptres, thrones and kingdoms from him, they are his vicegerents, and in some measure represent him, and are therefore called gods, and the children of the most high; yea, since Constantine, as advanced to the empire, was such an instrument in Christ's hand for the setting up and establishing his kingdom in it, Christ himself may be here represented as reigning over the Roman empire, as a presage and prelude of his reigning over all the earth another day.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And the woman fled into the wilderness] Not as soon as she was delivered of her child, which is not reasonable to suppose, and would have been improper, if not impracticable; nor indeed was this flight until after the war was over, mentioned in the next verses; nor until the dragon and his angels were conquered, and cast out; nor until a fresh persecution was raised by the dragon against the woman, as appears from *v. 14.* where this account stands in its proper place, and is here only introduced by way of prolepsis, or anticipation, and that with this view to shew what care was taken of the woman, as well as of her son: and this does not design the flight of the christians from Jerusalem to Pella, a little before the destruction of the former; nor the expulsion of the Jews or christians from Rome, either by Claudius or by Nero, but the disappearance of the true church, and its obscure state and condition quickly after the above advance of it; for through the riches and honours which Constantine bestowed upon the christians, they became vain, proud, ambitious, and careless; false doctrine and superstition obtained; the antichristian apostacy came on apace, and prevailed and increased, and so obscured the true church, that in process of time it became invisible, was in the cleft of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, or like persons in a wood or wilderness, not to be seen, as well as desolate and uncomfortable.

Where she hath a place prepared of God] For God has had, and will have a church in the worst of times; as he reserved a number in Elijah's

time, so he did in the times of the antichristian apostacy, who bowed not the knee to idolatry; this woman, the church, and her case, are the same with the 144000 sealed ones in chapter vii, whom God distinguished, hid, and preserved; for the wilderness is a place of retirement and safety, *Ezek. xxxiv. 25.* as well as of obscurity; and if any particular place is pointed at, I should think the valleys of Piedmont, which lie between France and Italy, are intended, where God has preserved, and continued a set of witnesses to the truth, in a succession, from the beginning of the apostacy to the present time, living in obscurity, and in safety, so far as not to be utterly destroyed.

That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days] In allusion to the children of Israel in the wilderness, where they were fed with manna forty years; so the overcomers or true christians in the Pergamos church-state, have hidden manna given them to eat, the food of the wilderness, with which church-state the church in the wilderness must be considered, as cotemporary, as also with the Thyatirian and Sardian church states; for though at the reformation, which the Sardian church-state introduces, the church appeared again, and as been ever since coming up out of the wilderness, yet she is still in it; where she is fed and nourished with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, by the faithful ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth; the time of whose prophesying is exactly of the same date with the woman's being in the wilderness, and with the reign of antichrist, namely forty-two months, or 1260 days, that this, so many years, chapters xi. 2, 3. and xiii. 5.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

And there was war in heaven] Not in the third heaven, the habitation of God, the seat of the angels and glorified saints, there is no discord, jars, and contentions there, nothing but peace, love, and joy; but in the church below, which is militant, and has in it as it were a company of two armies; or rather in the Roman empire, which was the heaven of Satan, the God of this world, and of his angels: and this war refers not to the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses; nor to the fall of the angels when they rebelled against God, lest their first estate, and were cast down to hell; nor to that ancient and stated enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of a woman, which has appeared

appeared in all ages of time, more or less, since the fall of Adam; nor to the combats which Christ personally had with Satan and his powers, when here on earth, as in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism, and in the garden, a little before his death, and on the cross, when he spoiled principalities and powers, and destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil; but rather to the conflict which Christ and his people had with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Roman powers, and with false teachers, during the three first centuries; though it seems best to understand it of the war commenced by Constantine against paganism, and which was finished by Theodosius, by whom heathenism received its death-wound, and was never restored since: the phrase of war in heaven, is not unknown to the Jews; they say (*i*), when Pharaoh pursued after Israel, there was war above and below, and there was a very "fierce war מלחמה," "in heaven."

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon] By whom is meant not a created angel, with whom his name does not agree, it signifying, "who is as God;" nor does it appear that there is any one created angel that presides over the rest, and has them at his command; though the Jews seem to imagine as if the angels were ranged under several heads and governors, of whom they make Michael to be one; for they say (*t*), "when the holy blessed God descended on mount Sinai, several companies of angels descended with him, שכינת מוחותו," "Michael and his company," "and Gabriel and his company:" so *kings of armies*, in *Psalms* lxxviii, 12. are by them interpreted of "kings of angels;" and it is asked who are these? and the answer is, Michael and Gabriel (*l*). Lord Napier thinks that the holy Ghost is designed, who is equally and truly God as the Father and the Son, and who in the hearts of the saints opposes Satan and his temptations; but it seems best to interpret it of Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, is his fellow, is one with the Father, and in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; he is the archangel, the first of the chief princes, the head of all principality and power, who is on the side of the Lord's people, pleads their cause, defends their persons, and saves them; see *Jude* 9. *Dan.* x. 13. and chapter xii. 1. and by "his angels" may be meant either the good angels, literally understood, who are his creatures, his ministers, and whom he employs under him, in protecting his people, and in destroying his enemies; or else the ministers of the

Gospel, who are called angels in this book, and who, under Christ, fight the good fight of faith, contend earnestly for it, being valiant for the truth upon earth; or rather the christian emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, and the christians with them, who opposed paganism in the empire, and at last subdued and cast it out.

And the dragon fought and his angels] There is such an order among the evil angels, as to have one of their own at the head of them, they having cast off their allegiance to God and Christ, who is styled the prince of devils, and his name is Beelzebub; hence we read of the devil and his angels; see *Matt.* xii. 24. and chapter xxv. 41. and these may be intended here, unless false teachers, who transform themselves into angels of light, as their leader sometimes does, should be thought to be meant, who resist the truth, and oppose themselves to the ministers of it; though rather Satan as presiding over, and influencing the Roman pagan empire, and the Roman emperors, who acted under him, are here designed; with whom Constantine and Theodosius, under Christ, combated, such as Maximinus, Maxentius, Licinius, Arbogastes, and Eugenius, and those that were with them. The Arabic version renders it, "the serpent with his soldiers."

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And prevailed not] That is, the dragon, or the devil, and his angels, prevailed not against Michael and his angels; but on the other hand, were conquered by them, as the above tyrants were by Constantine and Theodosius: some copies read in the singular number, "and he prevailed not;" as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and other copies in the plural number, "they prevailed not," as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions.

Neither was their place found any more in heaven] In the Roman empire; or "his place," as some copies and versions: this was the time of the judgment of the world, or of the empire as pagan; Satan the prince of the world, who had long governed in it, was now cast out of all power and authority in it, and all the idol gods in whom he was worshipped, with all the idolatrous priests, nor were there any more any heathen emperors, for after Constantine's time there was only Julian the apostate, and who reigned but a little while; and after Theodosius, who cleared the empire of paganism, there never was any, and there is reason to believe there never will be.

9 And

(i) Shaare Ora, fol. 26. 4.

(t) Debarim Rabbo, fol.

237. 4.

(l) Shishshirim Rabbo, fol. 14. 3. & 26. 3.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

And the great dragon was cast out] From heaven, or from power and authority in the Roman empire, namely the devil, where he had long presided; it is observable that Constantine himself speaks of the dragon being removed from the government of the commonwealth by the providence of God, and by the ministry, or means of him (*m*); and he had his own effigies on a table placed before the porch of his palace, with the cross over his head, and a dragon under his feet thrust through with darts, and falling headlong (*n*).

That old serpent] Who is so called because of old, from the beginning, almost as soon as the world was, he appeared in the form of a serpent, or rather made use of it as an instrument and means, by which he seduced Eve, and so brought on the ruin of mankind: it is very usual with the Jews to call the devil נחש הקדמון, "the old serpent (*o*)," wherefore John uses this phrase as a known one, to explain who was meant by the great dragon.

Called the Devil, and Satan] The first of these names signifies an accuser, and a forger of calumnies, and such is the old serpent; he accuses God to men, as if he was envious of their happiness, as in the case of our first parents, and of men to God of which there is an instance in the case of Job; and hence he is in the following verse called the accuser of the brethren; and the latter of them signifies an enemy, one that is filled with hatred and enmity to God and Christ, and to his church and people, whose adversary he is said to be, and at whose right hand he stands to resist, as he did Joshua the high-priest.

Which deceiveth the whole world] Which he did by deceiving our first parents, from whom all mankind spring, and in whose loins they were when they were deceived; so the Jews say (*p*) of the old serpent, that משה לכל העולם, "he deceived the whole world;" and so he deceived and corrupted the old world before the flood; and so he seduces every age and generation of men in the world; but here the Roman empire, sometimes called all the world, as in *Luke* ii. 1. is

meant, whom Satan deceived by drawing it into idolatry and superstition.

He was cast out into the earth] He was cast out of the Roman empire, from the rule of it, and worship in it, the heathen gods and heathen emperors being no more; when he possessed and instigated, and influenced the Huns, Goths, and Vandals, a meaner and baser sort of people, hereafter in this chapter called the earth, which is said to help the woman, contrary to the intention of Satan; the phrase denotes the greatness of the fall of Satan, his loss of power, and the meanness and low estate of the persons he afterwards had the power of, both the savage people before-mentioned, and the antichristian party.

And his angels were cast out with him] The heathen emperors, magistrates, priests, and other votaries of his, which he made use of as instruments to do his will.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven] Which was a song of praise on account of the victory obtained by Michael and his angels over the dragon and his, or for the overthrow and downfall of paganism in the Roman empire; for by heaven is meant the empire, now become christian, or the christian church-state in it; and the loud voice heard in it by John, shows that there was a great number in it, who rejoiced on this occasion, and that they were full of affection and fervency, and therefore expressed themselves in such manner, and in form following.

Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ] Salvation was come when Christ obtained it by his sufferings and death, and comes to particular persons in effectual vocation, and it will only be fully come when it is perfectly enjoyed in heaven; but here it designs a deliverance from Satan, as the god of this world, who was now dethroned, and cast down from his power, authority, and influence in the empire; and from pagan idolatry and superstition, and from the ten days of tribulation, the cruel and bloody persecutions under the heathen emperors; and denotes that safety and security, comfort, peace, and happiness, the churches enjoyed under the government of a christian emperor: and now was come strength; not

(m) Euseb. de Vita Constantini, l. 2. c. 46.

l. 3. c. 3.

(n) T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 29. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 3. 1. & 15. 2. & passim, Raya Mehimas in Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 8. 2. & 26. 3. & 46. 1. & Chaphor, fol. 101. 2.

(p) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 13. 3.

(n) Ibid.

not the strength of Christ personal, displayed in the redemption of his people; but rather of Christ mystical, of his church and interest, which had been very weak and low, and under oppression and persecution, but was now exalted, and in a flourishing condition, and was become strong and mighty; or it may design the strength and power of Christ, shown in destroying his enemies, in casting the dragon out of heaven down to the earth, and in bringing to confusion and destruction the heathen emperors, princes, and others, who fled to the rocks and mountains for fear of him, and because of his great wrath: also now came *the kingdom of our God*; the Gospel of the kingdom was preached every where, and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the empire, both which are sometimes signified by the kingdom of God; here was now an illustrious appearance of the kingdom of God in the world, such as had never been before; and which was a pledge and preface of the greatness of the kingdom, or of that everlasting kingdom which will be set up hereafter, when all other kingdoms will be at an end: to which is added *the power of his Christ*; or his authority as Lord and Christ, which took place at his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; and which will more fully appear at the last day, when he shall come in glory, and exercise his authority in judging the quick and dead; of which there was some resemblance at this time, in dethroning Satan, destroying paganism, and putting an end to the power of the heathen emperors and empire; and which is expressed in such language as the day of judgment is, chapter vi. 12—17. for to the opening of the sixth seal does this passage belong: a further account is given of the matter of this song, and the reason of it.

For the accuser of our brethren is cast down] Hence it appears that this is not a song of the angels in heaven, since the saints are never called their brethren, nor the angels theirs, but their fellow-servants; rather it may be thought to be the song of the saints in heaven, acknowledging those on earth to be their brethren, as they are, for there is but one family in heaven and in earth; and the saints on earth are called the brethren of the souls under the altar, chap. vi. 9, 11. but as this refers to the state of the church in Constantine's time, it must be the song of the saints in that state, who call the martyrs that had been slain under the former persecutions, their brethren; for that they are the persons meant, is clear from the following verse, whom Satan is an accuser of, for he is designed here; the word rendered Devil signifies an accuser, and a false one, and is so translated

Titus ii. 3. this is a name frequently given to Satan by the Jews, and have adopted into their language the very Greek word (*q*) that is here used; and often say of him that he accuses Israel, and particularly that he accuses Israel above, that is in heaven; and that he stands and *מקטר תמיד* (*r*), "continually accuses them," the very phrase used in the next clause: when Israel came out of Egypt they say (*s*), the angel Samael (the Devil) stood and accused them; the first day of the month Tisri, according to them (*t*) is appointed a day for blowing of trumpets, to confound Satan, who comes to accuse at that time; so they say (*u*), that Satan stood and accused Abraham, and others; and indeed he was an accuser from the beginning, both of God to men, and of men to God; we have instances in Job, and Joshua the high priest, *Job i. 8—11. Zech. iii. 1.* but here it refers to the accusations brought against the christians in the primitive times, during the ten persecutions, which were very horrid ones indeed; as that they had their private suppers, at which they eat their own infants, and their nightly meetings, for the gratifying of their lusts, in which they committed adultery, incest, and all manner of uncleanness; if ever a fire happened in a city, they were charged with it; and whenever there were any famine, or pestilence, or wars, or any public calamity, they were accused as the cause and occasion of it; as appears from the apologies for them written by Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius Felix, &c. so that Satan at this time was remarkably the accuser of the brethren; but now this father of lies was cast down, he was cast out of heaven, and deprived of that power and authority he had in the empire, and lost his influence over men, and could not spread his lies, and get his false charges and accusations credited and received as before; he was not indeed wholly destroyed, nor even shut up in the bottomless pit, but he was cast down to the earth; he was in a low condition, his power was greatly diminished, and he was conquered by Christ, and cast down and bruised under the feet of the saints.

Which accused them before our God day and night] So the evil spirit in Ahab's time, and Satan in Job's time, are said to stand before the Lord; and this shows the malice, and also the insolence of the devil, that he should stand and accuse the saints before God, who he knew was their God, and was on their side, and therefore his accusations

(*q*) Pirke Aboi, c. 4. §. 11. Mishon. & Bartenora in ibid.
 (*r*) Shaare Ora, fol. 21. 4. & 24. 2. (*s*) Shemot Rabba, §. 21. fol. 106. 4. (*t*) Targum Jon. in Num. xxi. 1.
 (*u*) Zohar in Num. fol. 107. 2.

tions could be of no avail; and though Christ appears in the presence of God for them, and is their advocate with the Father, yet he is constant and indefatigable in going about, and picking up charges against them, and carrying them to God.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb] The Lord Jesus Christ, by whose blood they were redeemed and ransomed out of the hands of Satan, that was stronger than they; and by which they were justified from all sin, and so all charges and condemnation were of no avail against them, whether of Satan or the world; and by which they were cleansed from all pollution, both internal and external; and by which even their conversation-garments were washed and made white; by this also they drew nigh to God with boldness, as to their own God, notwithstanding the accusations of Satan; and this they could, and did make use of as a shield to defend them against all his charges; and this being sprinkled upon them, as it gave them an inward conscience-peace amidst all, so it was their security from the destroying angel; and under this purple covering they went triumphantly to glory, having through it obtained an entire conquest over Satan: as also

And by the word of their testimony] Either by Christ, the essential Word, they bore record of, who is sharper than any two-edged sword, and through whom they were made more than conquerors; or rather by the use they made of the scriptures of truth, the sword of the spirit, the word of God, to which they bore a faithful testimony, and to which they adhered, and by so doing gained the victory over Satan and his instruments, whether false teachers or persecutors; and particularly by the Gospel, which they embraced, professed, and preached with constancy and courage, and by their last testimony they bore to it at their death, on the account of it, as it follows.

And they loved not their lives unto death] They did not value them; they made no account of them; they were not anxiously careful to preserve them; they chose to lose them; they ran to the stake, and willingly and cheerfully laid them down; they did not count them dear unto them, as said the apostle Paul, that they might finish their course with joy, and testify the Gospel of

the grace of God, or bear a testimony to it, *Acts* xx. 24. yea, as Christ has directed, *Luke* xiv. 26. they hated their lives in comparison of him, and when in competition with him and his Gospel; and by dying thus they conquered Satan; had they loved their lives, and saved them by denying Christ and his truths, Satan would have conquered them; but dying in the cause of Christ, and for it, they got the victory over him.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them] So in the prophetic language, at times, and upon occasions of rejoicing, the heavens are called upon to join, and bear a part therein, *Psalms* xcvi. 10, 11. *Isaiah* xlv. 23. and by these may be meant here, the angels of heaven, who rejoice at every advance of Christ's kingdom and interest; they rejoiced at his incarnation, and so they do at the conversion of every single sinner; and much more may they be thought to do so at such a time as this, when there were such multitudes of conversions, and the churches and interest of Christ in so flourishing a condition, and Satan's kingdom so much weakened; and to these may be joined the souls of the saints departed, who might be made acquainted with this wonderful change of things in the empire; and it may be also understood of the saints the members of the several churches, even all heavenly-minded persons, who were born from above, and were partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversations were in heaven; these are called upon to take their part in this song of praise and thanksgiving.

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!] Such as are of the earth, earthy, sensual, and earthly-minded persons; and who are like the troubled waters, and raging waves of the sea, cannot rest, but cast up mire and dirt, and foam out their own shame; the barbarous nations of the Goths and Vandals, carnal professors of religion, and the anti-christian party, which quickly upon this sprung up, may be intended, on whom this woe is denounced; the reason of which follows.

For the devil is come down unto you] And a greater woe cannot be upon men on earth, than to have the devil among them, who always brings mischief with him, and breathes nothing but ruin and destruction to men; he having lost his power in the Roman

Roman empire, possessed the above persons, and took up his residence among them; he came down, but not willingly, he was forced to it, he was cast down.

Having great wrath] Because he was conquered, and cast out of heaven, and was deprived of the worship that had been long given him, as the god of the world, and of that authority and influence which he had over men: and this his great wrath was seen in stirring up the Arians to persecute the christians; and in the times of Julian, when he endeavoured to regain his lost power; and in bringing in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals into the empire, to waste and destroy it; and in moving the antichristian party, which soon prevailed, to make war against the saints.

Because he knoweth that he hath but a short time] Ere he should be shut up in the bottomless pit, or be confined in the place of torment, and ere his full punishment should be inflicted on him; which time of his to tempt, deceive, disturb, and distress men, is to be no longer than during the forty-two months of antichrist's reign, and the 1260 days, or years, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and no longer than till the thousand years reign of Christ with his saints begins, which in comparison of his long reign in the Gentile world, is but a short time; and though after the thousand years are ended, he will be let loose, yet it will be but for a season, a very small time, when he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tormented night and day for ever and ever.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth] When the devil perceived he had not the power in the Roman empire he formerly had; and that his influence was only over the common and meaner sort of people, or over the earthly part of the church, and the barbarous nations in the world;

He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child] He was enraged at the church, and pursued her with great wrath, who had brought forth a christian emperor, by whom the kingdom of Christ was encouraged and supported in the empire; and because he could not come at this child to destroy it, that being caught up to God and to his throne, he attacks the woman, the church, in a new way, by stirring up earthly-minded professors of christianity, the Arians,

against her, and by bringing in an inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, now become christian; for this persecution cannot be understood of the persecution raised by the Jews, under the instigation of Satan, against the christian church, quickly after the ascension of Christ to heaven, for then the dragon had his place and power in the Roman empire, whereas this persecution was not till after the downfall of paganism in it; and for the same reason, it cannot design the persecution against the christians begun by Nero, and carried on under succeeding emperors, which were the ten days of tribulation under the Smyranean church-state, and were now over; these were the pains and birth-throws of the woman, the church, antecedent to, and which brought on the birth of the man child; and the persons that endured them were those that overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their death, which were all previous to these times: nor does it respect so much the persecution under Julian, which was carried on not by open force and violence, but by subtlety; he abstained from corporal punishments and shedding of blood, observing that these methods in former times had given the christians an opportunity of shewing their faith, patience, and fortitude, which had been the means of increasing their number; wherefore he betook himself to more private and artful methods, as to content himself with taking away the revenues of the ministers of the word, not suffering any christians to be in military employments, denying their children the use of schools, encouraging the Jews, their sworn enemies, and tolerating all sorts of heresies among themselves, that so they might destroy one another; to which may be added, that his reign was but one year and seven or eight months, and therefore can scarcely be thought to be pointed at here; but inasmuch as the Arian persecution was the first after the fall of paganism, and the principal one before the rise of antichrist, this may most reasonably be concluded to be meant here; and this began even in Constantine's time, for by means of an Arian presbyter that belonged to his sister Constantia, he was prevailed upon towards the close of his days, to believe that Arius was not the man he was said to be, and that he had had hard measure; insomuch that he was recalled, and received into communion, and Athanasius was driven from his church, and banished to Triers in France: and the historian says (w), that Constantine exercised *vim persecutionis*, the force of persecution, or a violent one; bishops

(w) Sulpitii Sever. Hist. Sacr. l. 2.

bishops were exiled, the clergy were severely handled, and laymen taken notice of, who separated themselves from the communion of the Arians. Under Constantius, his son, the persecution raged much, Athanasius being gone from Alexandria, and one Gregory put in his room; and the people being uneasy at it, some were banished, others cast into prison, and others had their goods confiscated; women were dragged by the hair of their heads to the tribunals, and used very ignominiously; three thousand soldiers entered a church on an Easter-day, and killed many women and children; virgins were stripped naked, and the bodies of those who died of their wounds were denied a burial, and cast to the dogs; and the persecution did not stop here, but went thro' Egypt, where the bishops, some of them were beaten with rods, others were laid in bonds, and others were banished: in Egypt and Lybia ninety bishops were forced away, sixteen were banished, whose churches were delivered to the Arians. Lucius of Adrianople was bound in chains, cast into prison, and there perished; Paul of Constantinople was first expelled, after that murdered, and Macedonius, an Arian, put in his room; and such who refused to commune with him suffered stripes, bonds, imprisonment, and other tortures, of which they died, and others were banished, where they perished; women that refused had their breasts cut off, or burnt, either with red-hot irons, or with eggs roasted at the fire to a very great heat (x); with other instances, too many to recite. Under Valens the emperor things were still worse, who became an Arian at the persuasion of his wife, and was baptized by Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, who, at his baptism, obliged him to swear, that he would defend Arianism, and persecute those of a contrary opinion; and accordingly he moved an irreconcilable war against them; at one time he expelled Melesius from Antioch, Eusebius from Samosata, Pelagius from Laodicea, and Barsis from Edessa; and all the rest that would not communicate with Euzoius, an Arian, he punished, either with pecuniary fines, or with stripes; and he is said to drown many in the river Orontes. This persecution went through the churches of Thrace, Dacia, and Pannonia; but what is most shocking of all, is, that some chosen ecclesiastical men, to the number of fourscore and one, were sent to him from Constantinople to Nicomedia, with a supplication to redress some injuries and grievances; at which he being angry, ordered Modestus, the governor, to take them and put them to death; but the governor fearing to do

it openly, lest there should be an insurrection, ordered a ship to be got ready, pretending to carry them into exile, but directed the mariners to go in a fisher's boat behind, and set fire to the ship, which they accordingly did when at sea, where all the above worthy men perished at once (y). It would be endless to rehearse all the instances of cruelty under this persecution; it need only be observed, that this was at the instigation of the devil, as all persecution is; and that Satan herein acted like himself, as the great dragon, as he was when Rome pagan was in power: these were christian emperors in name, but they exercised all the cruelties of the heathen ones, if they did not exceed them; and a greater regard was shown to paganism than to the orthodox religion. Valens tolerated all religions but that, especially heathenism; all his reign the fire burned upon the altars, images were honoured with libations and sacrifices, the public festivals of the heathens were kept, and the rites of Bacchus were performed in the streets (z); and this persecution was followed by the inundation of the barbarous nations, of which hereafter.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle] By which are meant, not the two testaments, by which she was supported under afflictions, trials, and persecutions, and against Satan and all his efforts; nor the two graces of faith and hope, by which she rose, and dwelt on high, in the view of invisible things, and with contempt of the world, its frowns, or flatteries; nor, as others think, prayer and good works, by the former of which she flew to God for supplies of grace and protection, and by the latter was useful and profitable to men, and gave glory to God, and escaped the just censures of the world; nor are two powerful kingdoms, within the dominions of the dragon, intended, as others have thought, who take them to be France and Spain, to which Britain was an appendix; when they were in the possession of Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the great, where the christians had refuge in the persecution under Dioclesian; but this was before the war in heaven, and the downfall of paganism in the empire, and before the above persecution; rather these two wings of the eagle

(x) Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 50, 56.

(y) Ibid. p. 73, 74.

(z) Ibid. p. 73. & c. 7. p. 304.

eagle designed the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire; it is not unusual in scripture for a monarchy, or monarch, as the Assyrian king and kingdom, to be signified by an eagle, and the wings of eagles, *Ezek. xvii. 3, 12. Dan. vii. 4.* and it is well known that the eagle is the ensign of the Roman empire, to which the allusion is in *Matt. xxiv. 28.* and at the death of Theodosius, the empire was divided, as has been observed before, into two parts; the eastern empire was given to one of his sons, and the western to another; and this was between the Arian persecution, and the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, when the church was fleeing, and gradually disappearing; and these two empires both went under the christian name, and supported the outward visible church, though much corrupted, and still more and more corrupting; by which means the pure members of the church, though few, and very obscure, were preserved. In a word, these wings may denote the swiftness in which the church proceeded to disappear, having lost her former simplicity, and glory, for which eagles wings are famous, *Prov. xxiii. 5.* and more especially that divine strength and support by which she was bore up, and carried through, and delivered out of sore afflictions and persecutions; see *Isaiah xl. 31.* The allusion is, to God's deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt, when he bore them as on eagles wings, and carried them through the wilderness, *Exod. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 10—12.* so here it follows,

That she might fly into the wilderness] A place desolate, and full of serpents and scorpions, uncomfortable, and destitute of provisions, and yet a place of safety as well as of solitariness and retirement; and chiefly designs the obscure and invisible state of the pure church in the times of the antichristian apostacy: see the note on *ψ. 6.*

Into her place] Which was prepared of God for her, as in *ψ. 6.*

Where she is nourished] By the ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth, who feed the church with knowledge and understanding; with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are sweet, comfortable, and nutritive; and with the ordinances of the Gospel, the entertainment of wisdom's house, the feast of fat things, and the breasts of consolation; and with Christ the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness: and that

For a time, and times, and half a time] That is, all the times of antichrist, the forty-two months of his reign; during which time the holy city is trodden under foot, and in a desolate and afflicted

condition outwardly, as may be learned by comparing together, *Dan. vii. 25. Rev. xiii. 5.* and chap. xi. 2. and until the end of wonders, or when time shall be no longer, or till the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, as appears from *Dan. xii. 7.* and *Rev. x. 6, 7.* This date is the same with 1260 days in *ψ. 6.* for time signifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and times two years, or 720 years; and half a time, half a year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years; and which are to be reckoned, not from the beginning of the church's flight in Constantine's time, or from the Arian persecution, but from her entering into her wilderness state, or entire disappearance upon the prevalence of the antichristian apostacy; which might be when the bishop of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop: and here, and during this time she is hid

From the face of the serpent] That is, from his wrath, so as that he cannot utterly destroy her, God having reserved a sealed number for himself; see chapter vi. 16. or from the sight of the serpent, as the Arabic version renders it, so as that he could not discern, with all his quick sight, where the church was.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood] Which cannot design any persecution before the fall of paganism, either of the Jews, or of the Romans; nor indeed the Arian persecution, since the casting out of this flood is distinguished from the above persecution, and was after the church began to flee upon that persecution; though it is not unusual for wicked persecutors, and violent persecutions, to be expressed by waters, and they are called proud waters, *Psal. cxxiv. 1—4.* and these may be said to be cast out of the mouth of the serpent, the devil, who was a persecutor, and a murderer from the beginning, and by whom all persecutors and persecutions are instigated, moved, and carried on; but rather, as the words of a man's mouth are as deep as waters, *Prov. xviii. 4.* and doctrines, good or bad, may be so called; that flood of errors and heresies, which were poured in between the times of Constantine, and the rise of antichrist may be here intended; such as the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ; the Nestorian heresy, which divided his person; and the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures in him; and the Macedonian heresy, which took away the deity of the holy Ghost; and the Pelagian

gian heresy, which destroyed the grace of God, and set up the power of man's free-will: and this flood of errors and heresies may be truly said to be cast out of the serpent's mouth; since the old serpent, the devil, is the father of all lies, and errors; and the above heresies are the doctrines of devils, and damnable ones; and were designed by Satan to destroy the souls of men, and ruin the church: though since this flood followed upon the Arian persecution, and was after the church began to flee, being supported and secured by the two divisions of the empire, eastern and western, the wings of the Roman eagle; it seems best by this flood to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations, which quickly followed that division; the Goths, Huns, Vandals, Heruli, Alans, and Lombards, who were poured in to the western empire, and over-ran, and at last destroyed it; so that this flood is cotemporary with the first four trumpets; after which followed the swarms of locusts, the Saracens, which infested, teized, and tormented the eastern empire; and after them the Turks, the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, were let loose, and like a mighty torrent overflowed, and utterly destroyed it; and all this was done at the instigation of Satan, he being filled with wrath, because the empire was become christian, and his view was to destroy the church in it: for this flood was cast

After the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood] Along with the empire, and be no more; but his designs were frustrated, and he disappointed; so people, nations, and tongues are compared to waters in chap. xvii. 15. see *Isaiah* viii. 7. and chap. xxviii. 2. which the Targum interprets of the armies of much people.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the earth helped the woman] By opening itself, and taking in what the serpent cast out, so that it could not reach the woman, and annoy her, as follows:

And the earth opened her mouth] As it did when it swallowed up Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, *Numb.* xvi. 30. to which history this may have some respect.

And swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth] If the flood refers to the Arian persecution, then the earth helping the woman, the church, and swallowing up this flood, may respect the Goths, who broke into the Roman

provinces, under their king Athanaricus, and fell upon the Arians with great rage and cruelty, and infested the Roman provinces, which were nearer; they seized upon Thrace, which was the occasion of tranquillity to the orthodox; for Valens being moved by these things, desisted from persecuting them, and leaving Antioch, he went to Constantinople to form measures for the carrying on of the war against the Goths (a); and thus the earth helped the woman. But if by the flood, the errors and heresies of those times are meant, then the councils may be intended by the earth; which, though they consisted of men that were earthly, and greatly apostatized in other things, yet opposed, refuted, and condemned these heresies and errors, and so were the means of preserving the church from them, as some think; though others are of opinion, that the barbarous nations are in this also designed, who embracing Arianism, and the corrupt religion, where they came, by which they were, in some measure, mollified and reconciled to the christians, did not seek to root them out, and destroy them, as Satan hoped they would; but since they themselves, with the Mahometans, are meant by the flood, the earth must be interpreted of the corrupt and antichristian church, the idolaters which sustained the force of this inundation, and for some time repelled it, and so secured the true church; and when the western empire was over-run by it, as by the Goths, &c. idolaters, earthly-minded men, and carnal professors, were the sufferers, and bore the shock of it; and when the eastern empire was over-run by the Saracens, the tormenting locusts, the green things, grass and trees, were not hurt by them; none of the sealed ones, only those who were not sealed, chap. ix. 4. and the Turkish inundation was a scourge upon the antichristian party; so that it was the earth, or earthly part of professors, the idolaters, that bore the fury and force of this flood, and broke it off from the church. And so sometimes wicked men are helpful to the saints, as the Philistines were serviceable to David, to screen him from the fury of Saul; and Lyfias, the chief captain, and Felix and Festus, Roman governors, were instruments of preserving the apostle Paul from falling into the hands of the Jews, his enemies; and the christians that were scattered by the persecution at Jerusalem, found refuge and safety among the Gentiles.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments

(a) *Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg.* cent. 4. c. 3. p. 80.

mandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman] The devil was very angry with the church, because he could not destroy her by the Arian persecution, he had raised; and because he could not carry her away with the flood, either of errors and heresies, or of the barbarous nations; and because he could not, by any means, come at her, and indeed did not well know where she was, a place being prepared for her of God in the wilderness, where she was taken care of: wherefore he took another method, as follows,

And went to make war with the remnant of her seed] Which refers to the war, the beast, to whom he gave his power, seat, and authority, is said to make with the saints; and which was entered into, and carried on by his instigation, of which there is an account in the following chapter: the persons with whom he went to make war are described as *her seed*; the seed of the church, her spiritual offspring, the sons and daughters she brought forth to Christ; between which seed, and Satan and his seed, there always was an enmity; and these are *the remnant* of her seed, a few persons scattered up and down, a remnant according to the election of grace; who were not in bodies, or in church-states, regularly formed, as heretofore, but in private families, and some here, and some there; and who were called out to bear a testimony for Christ in corrupt times: and these are further described as such,

Who keep the commandments of God] And not the traditions of men; nor are the commands of the moral law of God so much designed, though it is true, that these were kept by the seed of the church; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of God our saviour, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; which were kept by these faithful ones, as they had been delivered, when they began now to be sadly corrupted by the antichristian party.

And have the testimony of Jesus Christ] The Gospel, which is a testimony concerning him; see the note on chap. i. 2. This they had in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge, and saving experience of it; and this they had in their hands, they made a profession of it, they held it forth, and held it fast; all which was the reason of Satan's enmity against them, and war with them.

C H A P. XIII.

This chapter contains a description of the Romish antichrist, under the figure of two beasts, the one representing him in his civil power, the other in his ecclesiastical power. The first beast is described by its original, the sea, and by the monstrous shape of its several parts; its heads seven, in which were the name of blasphemy; its horns ten, on which were crowns; its skin like a leopard, its feet as a bear, and its mouth as a lion; and by its state and condition, having power, a throne, and great authority; and having one of its heads wounded, and healed; and by the great regard had unto him, being wondered at, and worshipped by all the world, and declared to be more powerful than any, and none to be like him, *ch. 1—4.* Next an account is given, of what he was suffered to have, a blaspheming mouth, and power to continue forty-two months, *ch. 5.* and of what he said or uttered, his blasphemy against God, his name, tabernacle, and the inhabitants of heaven, *ch. 6.* and of what he did by permission, made war with the saints, overcame them, and had power over all people, *ch. 7.* and of the worship given him by the reprobate part of the world, *ch. 8.* and the whole is concluded with an exhortation exciting attention to what had been said, with a threatening to the beast, and a word of comfort to the saints, *ch. 9, 10.* And then follows the description of the second beast, by its original, the earth; by its likeness to a lamb, and a dragon; to the former for its two horns, and to the latter for its speech, *ch. 11.* and by the actions ascribed to it, which are many; as exercising all the power of the first beast; causing all the inhabitants of the earth to worship that; doing miracles, of which one is mentioned, thereby deceiving the men of the world; ordering them to make an image to the wounded beast; giving life to it, so that it could speak; putting to death all that refused to worship it; obliging men of all ranks and degrees to have a mark in their right hands or foreheads, and forbidding such that had not, to buy or sell, *ch. 12—17.* And the chapter is concluded with an Epiphonema, exciting men of understanding to search out, and count the number of the beast's name, since it is possible to be done, being the number of a man, and easy to be done, consisting of three Greek letters, *α ε ς*, which are numerically, 666, *ch. 18.*

AND:

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "and he stood," &c. and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning the dragon, said to be wroth with the woman, and to go forth to make war with her seed, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, where some versions place this clause; and the Arabic version reads expressly, "and the serpent stood," &c. And this is thought by some to be the better reading, because of the connection with what goes before, and because there is no mention of the name of John, nor of his being called or removed from heaven, where he was beholding sights, and continuing the account of them, chapters iv. 1. and xii. 1. and xv. 1. as there is when he is shown sights elsewhere; see chapters xvii. 3. and xxi. 10. And besides, as the dragon was contriving a new way of persecuting the saints, and about to raise up a beast out of the sea, by which he might do it, to whom he would give his power, seat, and authority, he is represented as standing in a proper place for this purpose; it was upon the sand, which may signify a multitude of people employed by him, and also may denote the weakness and unsuccessfulness of his efforts in the issue; yet the Greek copies in general agree in the common reading, and refer it to John, who stood on the shore of the isle of Patmos, and in a fit place, in a visionary way, to behold the following sight: for that the next clause belongs to him is without doubt,

And saw a beast rise up out of the sea] By which is meant, not the devil, because it is in *7*. 2. distinguished from the dragon, who is the devil and Satan, as also elsewhere, chapters xvi. 13. and xx. 10. nor the old Roman empire, though there are many things which seem to agree; the Roman monarchy is called a *beast*; it is one of the four beasts in *Daniel* vii. 2, 4. which rose up out of the sea, from a multitude of people and nations, which were gathered to it, and composed it. Rome pagan had, as this beast has, seven heads, and ten horns, chapter xii. 3. and had power over all nations, and is therefore sometimes called the whole world, and exercised great cruelty upon the christians; but then this is signified by the *red dragon* itself, in the preceding chapter, and besides, had risen up before the times of John, whereas this is one of the things shown him,

which should be hereafter: this beast then was not, but was to come, chapters iv. 1. and xvii. 11. and was not to arise, nor did it arise till after the downfall of Rome pagan, and after the Arian persecution, after the woman's flight into the wilderness, and after, and upon the inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, as appears from the preceding chapter; nor will the time of this beast's duration agree with the old Roman empire, for this beast is to continue forty-two months, *7*. 5. which is the whole time of the holy city being trodden under foot, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; whereas the Roman monarchy, governed by emperors, did not last four hundred years. Moreover, as this beast is distinguished from the dragon, so it is said to have its power from him; whereas the Roman empire was of God, and obedience and subjection to it are always recommended to the saints in the scriptures, *Rom.* xiii. 1. *Tit.* iii. 1. *1 Pet.* ii. 13. much less can the empire, as become truly christian, be intended; nor are either the eastern or the Turkish empires designed, for neither of these had their seat at Rome, which the dragon gave to this beast, but at Constantinople: it remains then, that by it is meant the Roman empire, when divided into ten kingdoms, and united in the papacy; or it designs antichrist in his secular power, with the ten kings, that receive power with him as such one hour, and give their kingdom to him: now this beast is said to rise up out of the sea; either out of the abyss, the bottomless pit of hell, see chapters xi. 7. and xvii. 8. or out of the sea of this world, and the wicked in it, who are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; or out of the floods of errors and heresies, by which this man of sin was conceived, and cherished, and a way was paved for his open rising and appearance in the world; or rather, since waters design, in this book, nations, people, and tongues, see chapter xvii. 15. and the four beasts in *Daniel* are said to rise out of the sea, chap. vii. 2. and a multitude of people are compared to the waves of the sea, *Ezek.* xxvi. 3. see also *Isaiah* xvii. 12. and chap. lvii. 20. where the Jewish writers say (*b*), the nations are compared to the sea, as Israel to the sand, the inundation of the barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals into the empire, seem to be intended, which made great commotions and changes in it: these set up ten kingdoms in it, upon which antichrist arose, and placed himself at the head of them; these gave their kingdoms to the beast, and so

(b) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 44. 4. & 55. 2. & 63. 3.

so may be said to give rise unto him, especially as to his secular power.

Having seven heads] Which some understand of his perfect wisdom and knowledge, the head being the seat of knowledge, and seven a number of perfection; and so may refer to those boasted treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which antichrist pretends to have, as being the judge of controversies, and the infallible interpreter of the scriptures: or else the sevenfold form of government among the Romans is intended, as in chapter xii. 3. or rather as it is interpreted in chapter xvii. 9. the seven mountains on which Rome was built, and so design the city itself built on them, that being the metropolis of the empire, or the seven capital cities of the empire, as Mr Daubuz thinks; the whole is meant, for it is the same Roman monarchy as before, only in a different form.

And ten horns] The ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided upon its being wasted and vanquished by the Goths, and the ten kings of of them, which reigned with the beast, and gave their kingdoms to him; so horns signify kingdoms in *Zech. i. 18.*

And upon his horns ten crowns] Which distinguishes Rome papal from Rome pagan; the crowns in Rome pagan were upon the heads, or upon the emperors, that resided at Rome; and though it had ten horns, as here, and was divided into so many provinces, which were governed by deputies, proconsuls, &c. yet they were not kings, they had no crowns; but here the horns have crowns on them, because the governors of these ten kingdoms are crowned kings.

And upon his heads the name of blasphemy] Which refers not to Rome pagan, being called the eternal city, and Rome the goddess, and the like; but to Rome papal, or antichrist, who elsewhere is said to have the name Mystery, written upon the forehead, and to have blasphemy on his heads; and is called blasphemy in the abstract, as being a most blasphemous creature against God, Christ, and his people, and so his name is suitable to his character, mouth, and language, *1. 5, 6.* assuming that to himself, which only belongs to God and Christ, as power over the conscience, to forgive sin, &c. and even deity itself; see *2 Thess. ii. 4. Rev. xvii. 3.* The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "names of blasphemy."

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the

feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard] To which the Grecian kingdom is compared in *Dan. vii. 6.* because of that rapidity and swiftness with which Alexander over-ran the world, and set up this monarchy; and to which the Roman papal monarchy bears some resemblance; for as the Grecian monarchy was divided into several parts, which the leopard's spots may also point out, so the Roman empire was divided into ten parts, and united under the pope, as the head of them; and may be, in this form, compared to a leopard for its swiftness, *Hab. i. 8.* because this beast as soon as he arose, and got power, quickly, and in a very short time, extended it over all emperors, kings, princes, bishops, and over all kingdoms and churches; and for its spots, *Jer. xiii. 23.* which may be expressive both of the spots of sin and immorality of every kind, and of errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, with which antichrist and his followers abound; and for its insidiousness and cruelty, *Jer. v. 6. Hosea xiii. 7.* It lies in wait for its prey, and suddenly falls upon it, and devours it; and is a lively picture of the cunning sleight of the antichristian party, who lie in wait to deceive, and of their blood-thirstiness and barbarity. It is reported (c) of the leopard, that it is of a sweet smell, and by its odour it draws the fawns, does, &c. near it, and then makes a prey of them; so antichrist, by outward riches and preferments, by the external pomp and splendor of his religion, by his lying wonders and miracles, and by his great pretensions to holiness, and the like, allures multitudes unto him, and destroys them.

And his feet were as the feet of a bear] To which the Persian monarchy is compared, *Dan. vii. 5.* And this, as some think, may denote the strength and stability of the kingdom of antichrist, it having already endured a great while, and will be thought to be very firm and stable, when its ruin is near; or rather the wars and fightings of antichrist against the saints, the fore-feet of the bear being what that creature fights with, and tears and destroys such as oppose it, or fall a prey to it; and may also, as before, express the voraciousness and cruelty of antichrist, with respect to the souls and bodies of men.

And his mouth as the mouth of a lion] To which creature the Babylonian monarchy is compared, *Daniel*

(c) Elian, de Animal. l. 5. c. 40.

Daniel vii. 4. uttering out blasphemies against God, threatening ruin and destruction to men, and injecting fear into them, as the roaring of a lion does, and seizing upon, and devouring their estates and possessions, as well as butchering their persons. This beast has all the properties of the several beasts in Daniel's prophecy, wherefore all the figures there made use of to describe them are put together, to point unto us this monster of iniquity.

And the dragon gave him his power] For the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan, *2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.* he gave him his cunning and subtlety, as the old serpent, and taught him his arts and tricks to deceive mankind: and gave him a power to do signs and lying wonders, as well as communicated his malice and cruelty to persecute and oppress the saints; or an army of ecclesiastics to fight under him, and for him.

And his seat] At Rome, for there Satan's seat was, chapter ii. 13. in the time of the pagan Roman empire, which was quitted by Dioclesian and Maximian, when they resigned the government of it, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan; and when Constantine came to the throne, he removed to Byzantium, and rebuilt it, and called it after his name Constantinople, and had his residence there, as had all the eastern emperors afterwards; and as for the western emperors, they chiefly resided either at Milan or Ravenna, to which last place Odoacer, Theodoric, and other Gothic kings retired, when the government was in their hands; so that hereby this seat was empty, and way was made for antichrist to take it, as he did.

And great authority] Over the Roman empire, and the kings and kingdoms in it; he gave him his authority as the god of this world; what Christ refused at the hands of Satan, that his pretended vicar took, even the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; yea, assumed to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell, signified by his triple crown, at the instigation of the devil; so that it appears that he is not the vicar of Christ, but the vicar of the devil; and not the successor of Peter, but the successor of Satan; and that he holds his possessions, not by the donation of Constantine, but by the gift of the dragon.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

And I saw one of his heads] Not the Capitoline mountain, or the Capitol, the temple of Jupiter,

built on that hill, which was burnt by lightening in the times of Titus, and magnificently rebuilt by Domitian, which was a thing past, and of no such moment, as to be taken notice of here; nor any one of the Roman emperors particularly, as Julius Cesar, at whose death the empire received a wound, upon its first erection in him, but was healed by the settlement of Augustus in it; nor Nero, at whose death the family of the Cesars ceased, when the empire was threatened with ruin in the following reigns, but was restored and re-established in Vespasian, for these were before the times of John: but this is to be understood of the sixth head, or form of government, which obtained in the empire; namely, that of emperors, and of the destruction of Rome itself, the head of the empire, and which was built on seven mountains, designed by the seven heads of this beast: and this head was

As it were wounded to death] When the Roman empire was like a burning mountain cast into the sea; when Rome itself was taken, sacked, and burnt, more than once, particularly by Totilas; when Augustulus, the last of the emperors, was obliged to abdicate the throne; when Odoacer called himself, not emperor of Rome but king of Italy, and retired from Rome to Ravenna; and when Adolphus, another Gothic king, thought to have changed the name of Rome, and given it that of Gothia: this seemed to be a deadly wound to Rome, to the empire, and emperors.

And this deadly wound was healed] By the setting up of ten kingdoms in it, the kings of which gave them to the beast, to antichrist, the pope of Rome, and so the empire came to have an head again, a governor, though of another kind: some choose to understand this of the wound which antichrist received at the reformation, by Luther, Calvin and others, which has since been healing, popery recovering itself again in some countries, where it was driven out, and which, it is thought, will be entirely healed before the destruction.

And all the world wondered after the beast] Which expresses the large extent of antichrist's dominion, which reached to all the Roman empire, *Luke ii. 1.* yea to all kindreds, tongues, and nations, *1. 7.* so that the universality, the papists boast of, as a note of the true church, is manifestly a mark of the beast, or of antichrist; and also the great esteem he is had in by his followers, who admire his power and authority, his grandeur, pomp, and riches, his signs, and lying wonders, his pretended infallibility and holiness, his stock of merits and unwritten traditions, his skill to interpret scripture, and his power to forgive sins, and the like: they went after him, obeyed him, embraced

embraced his doctrine, attended his religion and worship with wonder and amazement.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

And they worshipped the dragon] The devil, in the idols, images, angels, and saints departed, to whom they give adoration, as did the Gentiles, whose successors they are, and whose name they bear; see 1 Cor. x. 26.

Which gave power unto the beast] As in 7. 2.

And they worshipped the beast] Not only in a civil way, being subject to him as their temporal lord, to whom they give homage, obedience, and tribute, but in a religious way; for antichrist sits in the temple to be worshipped as God, shewing himself that he is God, and receives adorations from his creatures the cardinals, and others; but woe to them that worship this beast; see chapter xiv. 9—11.

Saying, Who is like unto the beast?] Using such expressions as are used of God himself, implying that there is none like him, Exodus xv. 11. Psalm cxiii. 5. Isaiah xl. 18, 25. yea, they ascribe deity to him, calling him our Lord God the pope, God, and a God on earth; see the note on 2 Thess. ii. 4.

Who is able to make war with him?] And indeed, such was his power and strength once, that he was an over-match for emperors and kings; and those were badly off, that engaged in a war with him, when his power was such, that he could depose one, and set up another, kick the crowns of kings, tread upon the necks of emperors, oblige them to hold his stirrup, whilst he mounted his horse, and keep them barefoot at his gate for days together, waiting for admittance; of all which there are instances.

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

And there was given unto him a mouth] The beast is said to have a mouth before, like the mouth of a lion, 7. 2. but now he was moved and stirred up by the dragon, the devil, to open it, not only in a cruel and voracious way, but in a haughty, lying, and blasphemous manner: and this was given him, it was at the instigation of

Satan, and by divine permission; his coming, speaking, and acting were after the working of Satan, but not without the will of God; who, as he gave up many to a judicial blindness to believe his lies and blasphemies, gave up him to speak them, as follows.

Speaking great things and blasphemies] Great swelling words of vanity; calling himself by high and lofty titles, as Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, head of the church, universal bishop, &c. promising great things to his followers, riches, honours, pleasures, pardons, and heaven itself; and uttering things of a blasphemous kind, or great blasphemies, the particulars of which are mentioned in the next verse; so the little horn, who is the same with the Romish antichrist, is said to have a mouth speaking great things, very great things, and his look more stout than his fellows, Dan. vii. 8, 20.

And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months] To continue in being, or to continue blaspheming and speaking great things; and indeed, as long as he continues, he will continue blaspheming; as soon as he arose he had a name of blasphemy on his head, and his mouth was immediately opened in blasphemy, and so it continues, and will to the end of this date. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and power was given him to do signs, whatsoever he would;" miracles, lying signs and wonders; see 7. 13, 14. Some copies read, and so the Arabic version, "and power was given him to make war;" but he did not make war as soon as he arose, and so not all the time that is here allotted him, and the word war seems to be transcribed from 7. 7. The phrase rather intends his being, and the continuance and duration of it; which is the same period of time in which the holy city is trodden under foot by this beast, and the same with the 1260 days or years, in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman, the church, is in the wilderness, chapters xi. 2, 3, and xii. 6, 14. for forty-two months, reckoning thirty days to a month, as the eastern people did, make just 1260 days, for these things are all contemporary; hence it appears, that 1260 prophetic days, that is, years, contain the whole period of antichrist's reign and continuance; so that could we tell where they began, it might be exactly known when his reign will end; but for want of knowing the former, the best of calculators have failed in the latter: but seeing the time when he was made universal bishop by Phocas, bids fair for the time of his open appearance, and the beginning of his reign, and of his blasphemy, which was in the year 606, to which, if we add

1260, the expiration of his reign will fall in the year 1866, so that he may have upwards of an hundred and twenty years yet to continue; but of this we cannot be certain; however, the conjecture is not improbable.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God] By sitting as God in the temple of God; shewing himself that he is God; by suffering himself to be called by the name of God, God on earth, Lord God the pope, and to be worshipped as God; and by assuming infallibility, giving out that he cannot err, which only belongs to the God of truth; and by his idolatrous practices commanded by him, as the worshipping of idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, which is in scripture called blaspheming God; *Isaiah lxxv. 7. Ezek. xx. 27. see Dan. xi. 36.*

To blaspheme his name] His authority, by arrogating to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell; by taking upon him to bind and loose the consciences of men, and to dispense with the laws of God, and make them void by his own traditions; and to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, by removing kings, and setting up kings at pleasure, which is the prerogative of the King of kings; and by pretending to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and by granting indulgencies, pardons, &c. Moreover, by the name of God may be meant the scriptures, which are the means, by which God reveals and makes known himself; and these man of sin blasphemes, by making them a nose of wax, by imposing on them what senses he pleases; by assuming a right of being the sole interpreter of them, and the judge of all controversies; and by setting up his own unwritten traditions upon an equal foot with them, and above them; and by denying the common people the use of them, in their own language; and particularly the Gospel, which is sometimes called the name of the Lord, *Acts ix. 15.* may be intended, which is sadly blasphemed, and evil spoken of by antichrist; as the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, through the antichristian notions of merit, works of supererogation, pardons, penance, purgatory, and the like.

And his tabernacle] Meaning either the human nature of Christ, which God pitched, and not

man, the temple of his body, in which the God-head dwells bodily, and where the eternal Word dwelt, or tabernacled among men; this is blasphemed by pretending to transubstantiate the bread and wine in the supper of the Lord, into the very body and blood of Christ, and to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the mass, every time that blasphemous piece of service is performed: or else the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, where he chooses, desires, and delights to dwell; this is blasphemed by antichrist, by sitting in it as if he was God; asserting himself to be the head of the church, which solely belongs to Christ; taking upon him to coin new doctrines, and make new laws and orders, and impose them on it, and to change and alter the ordinances and discipline of it, as he pleases; and by persecuting and destroying all such who will not submit to his decrees and precepts: or else heaven itself, the habitation of God, and where his throne is, may be designed, which the pope blasphemously affirms to have the keys of; and that he can open and shut it, let persons into it, or exclude from it at pleasure; and that he can dispose of it, and sell it for money, and make and canonize new saints in it, as often as he thinks fit.

And them that dwell in heaven] Either saints below, members of a Gospel church, who are born from above, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversation is in heaven, who are by antichrist stigmatized and persecuted as schismatics and heretics; or rather angels and saints departed, who are in heaven, and dwell there, and who are worshipped and prayed to as mediators and intercessors; whose names are used in a very ridiculous and blasphemous manner, to their great dishonour and reproach, as well as to the injury of Christ, the only mediator between God and men.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints] The remnant of the woman's seed, chapter xii. 17. whom God has set apart for himself, Christ has cleansed from sin by his blood, and the holy Spirit has sanctified by his grace; and who under the influence of it live holy lives and conversations; against such Satan always bore an enmity: and it is an aggravation of the wickedness of the Romish antichrist, that he makes war with such, which he is stirred up to by Satan, with

with a malicious intent, and is permitted by God for the trial of the faith and patience of his people: this war of antichrist, with the saints, may be understood not merely spiritually, of his anathemas, excommunications, bulls, and the like; but literally, of his drawing the temporal sword against them; see *v. 10.* and bringing of armies against them, and fighting pitched battles; and it is thought there may be a special regard had to his war with the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which war, it is said, that ten hundred thousand men were slain; and may take in all his ways and methods of destroying the saints, by the bloody inquisition, murders, massacres, and punishments of all sorts; and also his last war with the two witnesses, in which they will be slain, which is yet to come, chapter xi. 7.

And to overcome them] Not so as to submit to him, and to forsake the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, but by killing them; and who by dying in the faith and cause of Christ, overcome Satan, get the victory over the world, and antichrist, and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them.

And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations] In the Roman empire, which wondered after him, and worshipped him, and over whom he has reigned, and has exercised both a temporal and spiritual jurisdiction; see chapter xvii. 15, 18.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him] The inhabitants of the Roman empire, the idolatrous part of it, the men of the world, earthly-minded men; who are as they came into the world, and are of the earth, earthly, and seek only after earthly honours, pleasures, and profits; these are the admirers and adorers of the beast.

Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world] By which book is meant God's predestination of men to eternal life, or his decree of election; why this is called the *book of life*, see the note on chapter iii. 5. and their names being written therein from the foundation of the world, for such a construction the words will bear, denotes that election is eternal, and is not an act of time, nor dependent upon any thing done in time; and that it is of particular persons, and not of bodies of men, of nations and churches, and still less of propo-

tions, or of persons so and so qualified, or under such conditions and circumstances; and that it is perfectly well known to God, and is sure and certain in its effects, and is unchangeable and irrevocable; for what is written in it, is written, and will always stand, not upon the foot of works, but of the sovereign grace of God: and this is called the Lamb's book; that is, Christ, who is compared to a lamb for its harmlessness, meekness, and patience, and was typified by the lambs in the legal sacrifices; and this book is called his, because he was present at the making of it, and was concerned in putting down the names in it, *John xiii. 18.* and he himself stands first in it as the elect of God, and the head of all the elect, who, as members, were chosen in him: the act of election was made in him, and stands sure in him; and he is the author and giver of that life, which men are chosen unto both here and hereafter: and he may be said to be slain from the foundation of the world; in the decree and purpose of God, by which he was set forth, or fore-appointed to be the propitiation for sin, and was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, to redeem his people by his blood; and in the promise of God immediately after the fall of man, that the seed of the woman should have his heel bruised, and he himself should bruise the serpent's head, which made it as sure as if it was then done; and in the sacrifices, which were immediately upon this offered up, and were types of the death and sacrifice of Christ; and in the faith of the saints, which brings distant things near, and considers them as if present; and also in his members, in Abel, and others, in whom he suffered, as he still does in his people: to which may be added, that such is the efficacy of the bloodshed and death of Christ, that it reached to all the saints from the beginning of the world, for the justification of their persons, the atonement of their sins, and cleansing from them; for the remission of sins that are passed; and for the redemption of transgressions under the first testament; for Old Testament saints from the beginning are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, as New Testament ones are. Something like this the Jews say (*) of the Messiah upon *Gen. xlix. 11.* "he washed his garments in wine, *וַיִּשְׁכַּח בַּיַּיִן*" "from the day that the world was created;" who is he? this is the king Messiah. —It is written *Gen. i. 2.* and the Spirit of God, &c. This is the Spirit of the king Messiah; and from the day that the world was created, "he washed his garments in wine," which the Jewish

(*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 128, 2, 3.

Jewish writers (*f*) understand of blood, which for its redness is like to wine; though they interpret it of the blood of the slain, with which the garments of the Messiah will be stained. Now such whole names are not written in this book of the Lamb, who have no interest in electing grace, nor in redemption by Christ, the slain Lamb of God, nor any right unto eternal life, who are reprobate persons, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, who are fore-ordained to condemnation, and are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, these are the followers and worshippers of antichrist.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

And diligently attend to this mystical description of antichrist, as being a matter of some difficulty to understand, as well as of great moment and importance, and seriously consider it, that he may know him, and his followers, and avoid them; see the note on chapter ii. 7.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity] As the devil, by whom men are led captive at his will, and the Romish antichrist, who leads multitudes of souls to hell; these shall be taken and cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The Jews (*g*) have a saying, that "*captivity* comes into the world for idolatry, uncleanness, and murder;" which three things are notorious in the Romish antichrist: and in the same treatise they say (*h*), that the sword, the next judgment mentioned, comes into the world for delay of justice, and the perversion of it.

He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword] The design of the phrase is to shew, that there will be a just retaliation made to the antichristian beast, for all his cruelty to the saints, and the murders of them; and that because he has shed much blood of the saints, blood shall be given him to drink, and he shall be used in like manner he has used others; see Gen. ix. 6. Matt. xxvi. 52.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints] Meaning either that hereby, through the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, the pa-

tience and faith of the saints are tried; and that they have great need of them, and of the exercise of them, under such usages; and that these being tried, and continue, will receive much commendation, honour, and praise: or else the sense is, that it requires both faith and patience in the saints, to believe that antichrist will be thus destroyed, and to wait quietly till the time comes. The Arabic version reads, "here is the patience and prayers of the saints;" who cry, how long will it be before our blood is avenged, and have need of patience to rest a while, till their prayers are answered.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

And I beheld another beast] The same with the first, only in another form; the same for being and person, but under a different consideration; the same antichrist, but appearing in another light and view: the first beast is the pope of Rome, at the head of the ten kingdoms, of which the Roman empire consisted; this other beast is the same pope of Rome, with his clergy, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. before he is described as a temporal monarch, now as a spiritual lord; there he is represented in his secular character, as having the seat, power, and authority of the dragon, of Rome pagan, engaging the attention and wonder of the whole world, and striking terror into them, and as making war with the saints, and ruling over all nations and tongues; here in his ecclesiastic character, pretending great humility and holiness, shewing signs and lying wonders, obliging to idolatry, and exercising tyranny and cruelty on all that will not profess his religion; and that this is the same beast with the first in substance, though not in shew, appears from his exercising the same power, causing all to worship the first beast, or himself, as a temporal lord, by which he is supported in his spiritual dignity; and by mention being made only of one beast, at the close of this account, and of his mark, name, and number being but one; nor is there any other but one hereafter spoken of in this book, either as ruling, or as conquered, and as taken, and as going into perdition, and as cast into the lake: this beast is described by his original,

Coming up out of the earth] Either from under it, out of the bottomless pit, from hell; or out of a low condition, a poor crawling earth-worm; the extracts of many of the popes, cardinals, and religious orders, have been very mean: or this may represent the secret and private manner, and

flow

(*f*) Targum Jon. & Jernf. & Aboe Ezra in Gen. xlix. 11.

(*g*) Pirke Aboe, c. 5. §. 9. (*h*) Ibid. §. 3.

slow degrees by which this monster of iniquity rose, as things gradually rise up out of the earth unobserved; this man of sin was springing up in the apostles time, and by degrees rose up to the power and authority he is here said to have: or rather, as this beast, in his other form, rose up out of the sea, out of the commotions raised in the empire by the barbarous nations, by whom he was lifted up to his imperial dignity; so he is described in this form, and is represented as rising up out of the earth, out of the earthly part of the church, or out of the apostasy which the visible church was sunk into, through the outward riches and honours bestowed on it by the christian emperors, which made way for the rising of this beast; and this shows the nature of his kingdom, which is worldly and earthly, and so truly anti-christian, being diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world.

And he had two horns like a lamb] Or "like to the Lamb;" the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God; though he has seven horns denoting fullness of power, this but two; he stands on mount Sion, with the 144000, having his Father's name on their foreheads, this upon the earth, with his followers, having his own mark and name upon them. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and he had two horns, and he seemed as a lamb;" he affected a lamb-like disposition, pretended to great humility and meekness, calling himself *servus servorum*, the servant of servants, to cover his pride, ambition, and tyranny; and would be thought to be a lamb without spot or blemish, ascribing to himself infallibility, and suffering himself to be called his holiness, when he is the man of sin, and mystery of iniquity: by his two horns some understand his twofold power, secular and ecclesiastic; but as these are separately represented by two beasts, rather these two horns are intended the two parts of the empire, eastern and western, into which it was divided, when this beast arose, and by which the papacy was raised to its power, and supported in it; and the two supreme pontiffs, the bishop of Rome, and the bishop of Constantinople; or else the beast's power of binding and loosing, of dispensing with the laws of God, and of imposing his own laws on the consciences of men.

And he spake as a dragon] Like the devil himself, affirming as he did, *Luke iv. 6.* that the power of disposing of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, was delivered to him, and he could give it to whom he would: he spake arrogantly, as if he was above all that is called God, and as if he was God himself; and he spake like a dragon cruelly, like the great red dragon,

like the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, breathing out slaughter and threatnings against the saints, as Rome pagan; and he spake lies in hypocrisy, blasphemies, idolatries, and doctrines of devils.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him] Sitting in the same seat, having the same power and authority from the dragon, making war with the saints by preaching, and writing against them, by anathemas, excommunications and bulls, and so overcame and silenced them, or delivered them over to the secular arm to be put to death, ruling over the consciences of men in a tyrannical way, in all nations, kindreds, and tongues, in the empire; and all this before, in the presence, and under the influence of the secular power of the papacy, signified by the first beast, and with his good liking, and for his credit and support.

And causeth the earth and them that dwell therein] The Roman empire, and the inhabitants of it, especially the carnal and earthly part of them.

To worship the first beast] To be subject to the temporal power of the papacy, or to submit to the pope as a temporal lord, to give homage and tribute to him, and the like, in order to support his worldly power and grandeur; and this was caused, or brought about by his emissaries, his spiritual vassals, his legates, cardinals, priests, &c. by their exhortations, persuasions, and commands, delivered both in writing and preaching.

Whose deadly wound was healed] Which deadly wound was given the Roman empire under its sixth head, the emperors, when they ceased, and was healed by the pope, the seventh head, being set as a temporal monarch over the ten kingdoms in it.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

And he doeth great wonders] Or miracles; not real, but pretended ones, lying wonders, which the popish legends are full of the accounts of, as done by the priests, or by this or the other saint.

So that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men] In imitation of Elijah; and this single instance is put instead of all others,

it being usual with the Jews to express all wonderful and miraculous operations by this miracle of Elijah's: and this may be understood mystically, of the pretensions of the papacy to confer the holy Ghost, and his gifts upon men, by breathing on them, which on the day of Pentecost were represented by cloven tongues, as of fire, coming down from heaven; or of their anathemas, curses, and excommunications, at which time burning torches and candles are cast up, and fall down, as emblems of divine wrath, which is called cursing men with bell, book, and candle; or else of the fire of persecution: *from heaven*; the secular powers of the empire: *upon the earth*; the common people; or this may be understood literally; so they tell us, that pope Zachary, once on a journey to Ravenna, had in the day-time a cloud to protect him from the heat, and in the night-time, armies of fire appeared in the clouds to go before him; and as pope Innocent was at mass, a golden crown was seen, and on it a dove, and under it a smoking censer, and hard by them two burning fire-brands: and it is reported of pope Hildebrand, that whenever he pleased, he could shake his sleeves, and sparks of fire would come out; and by these miracles deluded the eyes of the simple with a show of holiness; which, with other instances, are taken notice of by Napeir, Brightman, and other writers: and so here this is said to be done *in the sight of men*; to their apprehension, seemingly, in their view; they being cheated and deluded with an appearance and show of things which were not real.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live.

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth] The Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens's copies, read *mine*, instead of *them*; creatures of God, and professors of Christ, carnal and unregenerate men; not the elect of God, and true believers in Christ, these cannot be deceived by the signs and wonders of false Christs and false prophets; antichrist's deceiveableness of unrighteousness, only operates in them that perish.

By the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast] The secular power of the papacy encouraging, confirming, and giving a sanction to those lying miracles, and obliging

all to believe them, and come into the things, doctrines, or practices, they are designed to promote.

Saying to them that dwell on the earth] The apostate church, or the carnal inhabitants of the empire: ordering and commanding them

That they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live] Meaning the Roman empire, which had received a deadly wound in its sixth head, the emperors, by the sword of the Goths, Huns, &c. but now revived in its seventh head, the pope of Rome, to whom the ten kings gave their kingdoms: the image made to this beast some understand of the translation of the empire to Charles the Great, and his successors the emperors, by the pope of Rome, he ordaining so many electors to choose a king of the Romans, and elect an emperor when one was wanting; and this was an image to the first beast, a shadow, an appearance of the Roman empire, and but a shadow; for the power of inaugurating and crowning these emperors, and of setting up and deposing them when the pope pleased, he reserved to himself: but rather this designs the image-worship, or the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, of wood and stone, which he caused the inhabitants of the earth to make, and give adoration to; or else the whole papal religion, and the papacy itself, for the beast, and the image of the beast, are all along in this book afterwards mentioned together as being the same, chapters xiv. 9. and xv. 2. and xvi. 2. and xix. 20. and xx. 4. which is an image of the Gentile religion, in their high-priest, priests, temples, idols, offerings, garments, worshipping of angels, and saints departed, with a numerous train of rites and ceremonies, borrowed from the old pagan religion; hence the Papists are called Gentiles, chap. xi. 2. the Roman empire represented by these two beasts, and this image, had now one head, the pope, as before an emperor, and a religion in it much resembling its ancient one; but before that was set up, this image was in being.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast] Or *breath*; he breathed into it, and animated it; he gave this new religion a sanction, he confirmed and established it, and obliged all in his dominions to embrace and acknowledge it; and this he did by his decrees and canons, and those

those that refused, were delivered over to the secular power, which he also exercised under another consideration.

That the image of the beast should both speak] So that it was not like Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, that he set up, which required another to speak for it, and demand adoration to it; and should seem to be preferable to the dumb idols of the Gentiles, which have mouths, but speak not; and may be understood either of the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints, which it is pretended, and the people are made to believe, that they do at times actually speak, and really weep and laugh, as it may serve their different purposes; or this image may be said to speak by the decrees, canons, anathemas, curses, threatenings, persuasions, doctrines, and blasphemies of the pope and his clergy; so that this image is like both the first and second beast; it has a mouth speaking blasphemies, as the first, and it speaks like a dragon, as the second.

And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed] Which, according to the generality of copies, refers to the image itself, that that has a power from the beast as to speak, so to put to death those that refuse to worship it; but the Complutensian edition reads *καὶ ποιοῦν*, "and causes;" that is, the beast causes, or orders all those that will not worship the image, to be killed; that is, that as many as will not embrace and profess the popish religion, shall be put to death; and these are the known orders and decrees of the papacy, which have been executed by the inquisition, and other hands, in innumerable instances; the blood of all the saints and prophets is found in Rome papal, and will be avenged; these are the martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the whore on the scarlet-coloured beast has been made drunk; and this sense is confirmed by the eastern versions.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond] Men of all ranks and degrees, states and conditions, within his jurisdiction; this refers to the beast, and not to the image.

To receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads] Or "that they might give themselves marks," as the Complutensian edition reads; which is an allusion either to the custom among the Romans of imprinting marks upon their servants and soldiers, by which they might be known

to whom they belonged; servants had them in their foreheads (i); and soldiers in their hands (k); or to the usages of the Jews in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God, and their obedience to it; or to the practices of the heathens, in putting the mark of the god they worshipped upon their bodies; see 3 Maccab. ii. 21. so Maimonides (l) says, it was a custom with the Gentiles to mark themselves with their idols, shewing that they were their bought servants, and were marked for their service; the sense is, that some received the mark in one place, and some in another: those who were obliged to receive the mark in the right hand, seem to be the clergy, such who entered into holy orders; who lifted up their right hand and swore and vowed allegiance to the pope, and testified they were ready to defend and support his religion and interest; and who in their ordination are said to have an indelible character impressed on them; and those who received the mark in their foreheads, are the common people in general, who one and all have the same impress upon them; which may intend either the sign of the cross in baptism, or rather their open confession of the popish religion, which they as publicly avow and declare as if it had been written on their foreheads.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

And that no man might buy or sell] Either in an ecclesiastical sense, as to be in any church-office, or perform any such service, to say mass, hear confession, give absolution, sell pardons and indulgences, &c. or in a civil sense, as to trade, and exercise merchandize; and this was forbidden by several popish councils and synods; the Lateran council under pope Alexander, decreed against the Waldenses and Albigenses, that no one should presume to retain or encourage them in their houses or countries, or trade with them; and the synod of Tours in France forbid any reception of heretics, or protection, and that any communion should be had with them "in buying and selling," as Mr Mede has observed; and it was ordered by a bull of pope Martin the Fifth, that no contract should be made with such, and that they should not follow any business and merchandize.

Save he that had the mark] Took the oath to be true to the pope, or made a public profession of the popish religion.

Or

(i) Apulei Metamorph. l. 9. Ausonii Epigram. l. 15. Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 3. (k) Actius apud Turnebi Advers. l. 23. c. 12. (l) Hilkot Obede Cochab. c. 12. §. 11.

Or the name of the beast] Papists, so called from the pope; thus the antichristians are called from antichrist, as the christians from Christ.

Or the number of his name] Which is either the same with the number of the beast, in the following verse, or is something distinct from it; and those who have it may be such persons who neither have the indelible character of the Romish clergy, nor are open professors of the popish religion, but are in heart inclined to it, and privately and secretly promote it, by their doctrines and practices; and so are numbered, reckoned, esteemed, and accounted of by the papists, and receive favours from them; or rather such who openly "furnish the drink-offering" in the mass, mixed with wine and water, *וַיִּשְׂכּוּ*, for that number, *Isaiah lxxv. 11.*

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.

Here is wisdom] Not only in the above description of the two beasts, but in what follows as to the number of the beast, these two now coalescing in one, and have one and the same number; and to wrap it up, and conceal it in such an obscure manner, shows great wisdom in God, as it requires much in man, and serves greatly to exercise all his intellectual powers to find it out.

Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast] Whoever has skill in numbers, let him make use of it, that he may know the name and nature of the antichristian beast, and the numerical letters of his name, or the number of him, and of the time when he arose, and when he will expire.

For it is the number of a man] Either a number that may be reckoned by man, or which is in common use among men; see chap. xxi. 17. or that which is contained in the name of a man.

And his number is six hundred threescore and six] Which some think refers to the time of the rise of antichrist, in the year 666; but that seems rather to be in the year 606, when the bishop of Rome obtained the name of universal bishop; others have been of opinion that it refers to the expiration of the beast, which they thought would have been in the year 1666, the number of the thousand being dropped, as it is in our common way of speaking; as when we say the Spanish invasion was in 88, meaning 1588, and the civil wars began in 41, that is, 1641. but time has shown that this was a mistaken sense; the more prevailing opinion is that of Mr Potter, who has

wrote a peculiar and learned treatise upon this passage, who makes the counting of this number to be no other than the extracting of its root, which is the number 25, which when multiplied into itself, and the fraction in working it 41 is added, makes up the square number 666; and now 25 being added to A. D. 33, makes 58, which was the time of the beast's conception, to which if 666 is added, it brings us to the year 724, when he arrived to his age of manhood, and when the war about the worshipping of images broke out: but others think that the numeral letters in some man's name which amount to this date, and which agrees with antichrist, are intended; and here various conjectures are made; some have observed, that in genealogical arithmetic the number of Adonikam's posterity is 666, *Exra ii. 13.* whose name signifies "a lord risen up, or risen;" and suits very well with antichrist, who is risen up, and assumes a lordly domination over the kings of the earth; and it is further observed, that the Hebrew word *רומי*, which signifies Roman, and having the word beast or kingdom joined to it, designs the Roman beast, or kingdom, consists of numeral letters, which make up this sum; and so the Hebrew word *שֶׁטֶר*, *Sethur*, which is the name of a man, *Numbers xiii. 13.* and signifies *mystery*, in its numeral letters comes just to this number, and one of the names of the whore of Babylon is *mystery*, *Rev. xvii. 5.* but the name *Lateinos* bids as fair as any, which is mentioned by so ancient a writer as Irenæus, who was a hearer of Polycarp, a disciple of John, the writer of this book; now the numeral value of the letters of this word makes up exactly 666, thus; *λ. 30. α. 1. τ. 300. ι. 5. ρ. 10. ν. 50. ο. 70. ι. 200.* in all 666; and it is well known that the church of Rome is called the Latin church, and the pope of Rome the head of the Latin church, and his seat is in the Latin empire, and the service of the beast is in the Latin tongue, and the Bible is kept in that language, from the reading of the common people: it has been observed that the numeral letters in Ludovicus, or Lewis, which is a common name of the French kings, and is the name of the present French king, make up this same number; and may denote the destruction of antichrist, which will quickly follow the downfall of the kingdom of France, under a king of this name; and the rather, since this was the last of the ten kingdoms that was set up, and in which the primitive beast subsists, and the only one that has not yet been conquered, or in which a revolution has not been; and since this is the tenth part of the city which shall fall a little before the third woe comes on: and that it may

may fall under Ludovicus, or Lewis, the present French king, may be hoped for, and is desireable.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter contains three visions; one of the Lamb on mount Zion, another of the three angels preaching against Babylon, and the third of the harvest and vintage. The vision of the Lamb is in *ch. 1.* which is no other than Christ, described by his similitude, as a lamb; by the place where he was, mount Zion; by his position there, standing, and by the company that were with him, whose number were 144000, and their character, his Father's name written on their foreheads; at the same time a voice was heard from heaven, comparable to the sound of many waters, of thunders, and of harps, and a song sung which none could learn but the above number with the Lamb, *ch. 2, 3.* who are described by their purity, chastity, and strict adherence to Christ; by their redemption through him; by their being the first-fruits of God and of the Lamb, and by their integrity and unblemished character, *ch. 4, 5.* next follows the account of the three angels; the first comes with the everlasting Gospel, to preach it to all men, loudly calling upon all to fear and worship God, and give glory to him, since he is the creator of all, and the hour of his judgment is come, *ch. 6, 7.* the second proclaims the fall of Babylon, with the reason of it, *ch. 8.* and the third denounces the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the beast in the most public manner, and that for ever, *ch. 9—11.* and this vision is closed with some expressions, shewing that till this was done, the patience of the saints would be tried, and the true worshippers of the Lamb be discovered, and comforting them with an assurance of that rest that remains after death for the faithful followers of Christ, *ch. 12, 13.* after this is the vision of the harvest and vintage of the earth. The reaper is described by his form, like the Son of man; by his seat, a white cloud; by a golden crown on his head, and by a sharp sickle in his hand, *ch. 14.* who is called upon by an angel out of the temple to make use of his sickle, and reap, because the time of reaping was come, the harvest being ripe, *ch. 15.* upon which he thrusts in his sickle, and reaps the earth, *ch. 16.* after this, another angel appears out of the temple, with a sharp sickle, to whom another angel from the altar, that had power over fire, calls to make use of his sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine, since the grapes were fully ripe, *ch. 17, 18.* upon which he

VOL. V.

thrusts in his sickle, and gathers them, and casts them into the wine-press of divine wrath, which being troden, blood comes out of it to the horses bridles for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, *ch. 19, 20.*

AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read "the Lamb;" the same that had been seen before in the midst of the throne, chap. v. 6. and all the Oriental versions have the same article also; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for mention is made of his Father in a following clause; the king of Zion, where he is seen standing, and the redeemer of his people, who are at large described; it is the same lamb who is so often spoken of in this book before: in the two preceding chapters an account is given of the state of the church, as oppressed under Rome pagan, and Rome papal, and here of its more glorious and victorious condition, with Christ at the head of it; in the last chapter antichrist is described, with his followers and worshippers, and as exercising tyranny and cruelty upon the saints, and here Christ and his followers are represented in vision, and some hints given of the fall of Babylon, and of the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the beast, and of the happiness of those who belong to the Lamb; and of him it is here said, that he

Stood on the mount Sion] By which is meant not heaven, but the church on earth; why that is called mount Sion, see the note on *Heb. xii. 22.* here Christ the Lamb stood, as presiding over it, being king of Sion, or the church; where he stood and fed, or ruled, in the name of the Lord, and in the majesty of his God; and where he appeared in the defence of his church and people, oppressed by antichrist; for he is Michael that standeth for the children of his people, and who stands with courage, and in the greatness of his strength, and is invincible; nor does he stand here alone.

And with him an hundred forty and four thousand] The same with those in chap. vii. 3, 4. though all the world wondered after the beast, and all that dwelt upon the earth worshipped him, yet there was a number preserved that did not bow the knee to him; a remnant according to the election of grace, who were called out of the world, and brought to Sion, and were on the side of the

4 E

Lamb,

Lamb, and abode by him, and cleaved unto him.

Having his Father's name written in their foreheads] Not baptism; administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, as some think; nor eternal election, as others, though as their names were written in the Lamb's book of life, so this was manifest to themselves and others, as if his name and his Father's had been written in their foreheads; but rather adoption, the new name of a child of God, they having the spirit of adoption, whereby they cried Abba, Father, and being openly and manifestatively the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; unless it should be thought there is an allusion to the inscription in the mitre on the forehead of the high-priest, "holiness to the Lord," and so be expressive of that visible holiness which will be on the saints in the spiritual reign of Christ, which this vision respects; see *Zech. xiv. 20.* or to the frontlets between the eyes of the people of Israel, to put them in mind of the law, and their obedience to it, *Deut. vi. 8.* and so may here denote the engagements of those saints in the service of God; though perhaps no more is intended than their open and hearty profession of their faith, and that they were not ashamed of appearing in the cause of God and truth, nor of Christ and his words, his Gospel and ordinances: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "having his name (the Lamb's) and his Father's name written in their foreheads;" and the Ethiopic version adds, "and of his holy Spirit." Mr Daubuz thinks this vision refers to the times of Constantine, and to the christians then, and particularly the council of Nice, and as cotemporary with that in chap. xii.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And I heard a voice from heaven] The same with the voices heard in heaven upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 15.

As the voice of many waters] Very loud, and uttered by a great multitude of people, signified by waters in this book, chapter xvii. 15. the same with those that praise the Lord for the destruction of antichrist, and for the marriage of the Lamb, chap. xix. 1-7.

And as the voice of a great thunder] To which the Gospel may be compared for its open, loud

publication, being heard far and near, as thunder is.

And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps] That is, singing the praises of God, for the fall of Babylon, the happy state and condition of the church, and the blessings of grace; the harp being a musical instrument, used under the Old Testament in singing praise: Brightman thinks that these different sounds represent the course of Gospel doctrine, and the church's voice throughout the reign of antichrist; that when the church first went into the wilderness, her voice was like the murmuring of waters, confused and indistinct; when she began to revive under the Waldenses and Albigenes, Wickliff, Huss, &c. her voice was like thunder, loud and terrible; and at the reformation, it was as the voice of harpers, when confessions of faith were published with sweet harmony and consent. Others have thought that the different properties and efficacy of the Gospel are designed; as its rapidity and irresistible force, by the many waters; its striking and shaking the consciences of men by the thunder, Christ's ministers being sometimes Boanergesses, sons of thunder; and its harmonious music, pleasant sound, peace, joy, and comfort it brings by the voice of harpers. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, "the voice which I heard was as harpers," &c.

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

And they sung as it were a new song] The song of redeeming grace, the same with that in chap. v. 9. see the note there: this is to be understood of the 144000, who sung it.

Before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders] That is, publicly in the church, the ministers and members being present; of these see the notes on chap. iv. 4, 6.

And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth] Out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; from among the men of the earth, and out of the apostate church, called the earth, in opposition to the pure church, which so often goes by the name of heaven in this book; and these in consequence of being redeemed by the blood of Christ, were called by grace out of the

the world; and such only can sing the song of redemption with application to themselves; and say he has redeemed us, and loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood; to none but these is it given to know spiritually and experimentally the mysteries of electing and redeeming grace; the natural and carnal man neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he learn them by hearing, reading, study and conversation, unless it be only in a notional and speculative way. The Jews speak of a new song, which the angels have never used (*m*); "it is said, *Psalms* xcvi. 1, *sing unto the Lord a new song*; a new song, for there is an old song; but "this song is what the angels never praised him with, and therefore it is new;" and indeed the song of redeeming love is peculiar to men.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

These are they which were not defiled with women] With the whore of Rome, and her harlots, she is the mother of; whilst the kings and inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of their fornication, or committed idolatry with them, which is spiritual fornication, and is here meant by being defiled with them, these were free from such pollutions, or idolatrous practices.

For they are virgins] For their beauty and comeliness in Christ, chastity, sincerity of their love, incorruptness in doctrine and worship, and for the uprightness of conversation; see the note on *Matt.* xxv. 1.

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth] As the sheep follow the shepherd of the flock, and which is a character of Christ's sheep, *John* x. 4, 5, 27. These follow Christ in the exercise of the graces of humility, patience, and love; and in the performance of the several duties of religion, and subjection to ordinances, and in the path of sufferings; and in every way in which Christ the Lamb has gone before them, or in his word and providence leads and directs them to, whether it be grateful to the flesh or not; particularly they follow where he is preached, and his word and ordinances are faithfully administered; and they follow him to heaven, where he is: it was part of the oath taken by the Roman soldiers *non estis ei in servitium* *non estis ei in servitium* *non estis ei in servitium*.

"to follow the generals wherever they should lead (*n*)," to which it is thought there is an allusion here; see *2 Sam.* xv. 21.

These were redeemed from among men] By Jesus, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add, and so the Complutensian edition; by the blood of Christ, for all men are not redeemed by it; and in consequence of this they were called, and delivered from this present evil world, and the men of it, and from a vain, wicked, and idolatrous conversation with it.

Being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb] In allusion to the first-fruits under the law, which represented, and sanctified the lump, and shewed that harvest was coming; so these persons are called the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb, being called by grace, and consecrated to their worship and service, with reference to the harvest of souls, or that large number of them which will be gathered in during the spiritual reign of Christ, which these persons will be at the beginning of; and as those who are first called and converted in a country or nation are said to be the first-fruits of it, *Rom.* xvi. 5. *1 Cor.* xvi. 15. so these being the first in the period of time to which respect is had, bear this name; and as the converted Jews received the first-fruits of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, and at other times, so these will receive the first-fruits of the far greater pouring forth of the Spirit in the latter day, which will begin, and usher in the kingdom of Christ; see *Rom.* viii. 23.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

And in their mouth was found no guile] Or "a lie," as the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read; by which may be meant idolatry, for idols and idolatrous practices are often called lies, and lying vanities; see *Jer.* xvi. 19. *Amos* ii. 4. *Jon.* ii. 8. *Rom.* i. 25. and the sense is, that the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome were not among them: or it may design false doctrine, and the meaning be, that they did not speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of antichrist do; nor were they given up to believe a lie, as they are: the generality of copies read, "no guile;" which is expressive of the sincerity of their words; there was no deceit nor hypocrisy in them; they did not speak with flattering lips to men, nor did they draw nigh to God.

(m) Zohar in Num. fol. 70. 4.

(n) Vid. Lyell Dissert. de Juramento. c. 2. p. 258.

God with their mouths, when their hearts were far from him; they were Israelites indeed, like Nathaniel, in whom was no guile; though not in so strict a sense, in which this phrase is used of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 22.

For they are without fault before the throne of God] Not as considered in themselves, as if they were entirely free from sin, and never committed any; though it might be true of them, that in general they were of unblemished lives and conversations, that is, not guilty of any notorious and scandalous crimes; but rather the sense is, that they were without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as being washed in the blood of Christ, and so cleansed from all sin, and as being justified by his righteousness from all iniquity; and so were before the throne of God, and in the sight of divine justice, unblameable and irreproveable; see Jude 24. Col. i. 22. the phrase *before the throne of God*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Complutensian edition.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

And I saw another angel] This is to be understood not of one of the ministering spirits so called; for though wings are sometimes ascribed to angels, and Gabriel is said to fly swiftly; and though they desire to look into the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel, yet the preaching of that is not committed to any of them; but a minister of the Gospel is intended, who is the angel of the church, for in this book pastors of churches are so called, chap. i. 20. and not a single minister of the Gospel is meant, but a set of Gospel ministers; and some think that those are designed who appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries, both in the eastern and western empire, against the worshipping of images; since this angel calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to fear God, give glory to him, and worship him, and not images; but there was little of the everlasting Gospel preached in those times. Others are of opinion that those who preceded, and led on to the reformation, are pointed at by this angel, such as Wickliff in England, Franciscus Petrarcha in Italy, John Huss and Jerom of Prague in Bohemia, with others; but these also had not the everlasting Gospel in its clearness and purity, nor did they preach it to all the inhabitants of the earth; rather I think a set of Gospel preachers

are intended, who will appear at the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ, and will be a means of ushering it in; and these are the watchmen of Zion, who will give the Lord no rest till he has made Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth; and who will then see eye to eye in Gospel mysteries, and will publish good tidings of peace and salvation, and proclaim Zion's king reigning, *Isaiah* lxii. 6, 7. and chap. lii. 7, 8. this angel is called *another*, being distinct from the voice heard in *Y. 2.* though he is the first with respect to the following angels, as appears from *Y. 9.* the place where John saw this angel, and the position he was in, follow.

Fly in the midst of heaven] The church, the great congregation, the several congregations of the saints; in the midst of which these ministers will preach righteousness, salvation, lovingkindness, and truth, as Christ has done before them; and from hence the word of the Lord will go forth to all parts of the world: they will preach the Gospel openly and publicly, with great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity, in the view of all men, not fearing the faces of any; and the Gospel ministered by them will have a swift, sudden, and universal spread; they themselves will run to and fro, and the Gospel will run and be glorified, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes will flock to Christ, who in that day will be alone exalted; for these ministers will come forth publicly.

Having the everlasting Gospel] The Gospel in its fullness and purity; the Gospel of the grace of God, of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of peace and pardon by his blood, and of complete salvation by him; called *everlasting*, because the substance of it was settled from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace; it was ordained before the world was, and was hid in God from the beginning; and the revelation of it was of old; it was made to our first parents immediately after the fall, and was spoken of by all God's holy prophets which have been since the world began; it was preached before unto Abraham, and in the times of *Isaiah*, and by other prophets, and so is no new, upstart doctrine: besides, the matter of it is everlasting; it treats of everlasting things; of the eternal election of persons to salvation; of God's everlasting love to them; of an everlasting covenant he made with Christ on their account; of blessings, promises, and grace given to them in him, before the world began; and of his being set up so early as a mediator, and of his going forth in a way of grace from everlasting; as well as it reveals an everlasting righteousness, and brings life and immortality,

mortality, or eternal life to light, or shews the way to everlasting life and happiness; to which may be added, that it will abide for ever, it will always remain, and that inexpugnable, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; it will continue till all the elect of God are gathered in, notwithstanding the violence of persecutors, or the craft of seducers; nor will it be antiquated and made void by another Gospel succeeding it, for there will be no other: now this the ministers of those times will have; not in their heads only, by knowledge, but in their hearts, by experience, and will have it in their mouths, and speak it out freely and openly, and will have a commission from Christ to preach it, and gifts qualifying them for it.

To preach unto them that dwell on the earth] That are in the apostate church, carnal, unregenerate, and earthly persons. The Complutensian edition reads, "that sit on the earth;" as persons abject, mean, and distressed, to whom the Gospel is acceptable.

And to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people] Whether Jews, Turks, or pagans, for the Gospel, as before observed, will now have an universal spread all the world over.

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Saying with a loud voice] These ministers shall lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and deliver out the Gospel fully and faithfully, with great authority and power, and with much vehemence, zeal, and fervency.

Fear God] Or "the Lord," as some copies, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read; not the antichristian beast and his followers, as men formerly had done; but God the Lord, and him not with a servile fear, or a fear of punishment; of wrath, hell, and damnation; nor with a distrust of his grace, love, power, and providence, much less with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly fear, which has the goodness of God for its object, and springs from a sense of the love of God, and is a reverential affection for him, and is attended with faith and spiritual joy, and includes all worship of him, both internal and external; hence the Syriac version renders it, "serve God:" and this shews that the duties of religion are to be inculcated by Gospel ministers, and that they will be urged by them when the

everlasting Gospel is preached in its greatest purity.

And give glory to him] And not to graven images, which he will not allow of; and glory is to be given to him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; and is given when men ascribe greatness to him, praise his works of creation, and acquiesce in those of providence, acknowledging the power, goodness, and wisdom of God in all; and when they give thanks for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual, and especially for Jesus Christ; and when they exercise faith on him as their God in Christ, and ascribe their salvation to him and to the Lamb, and not to the works of their hands; and when they attend his worship, and the duties of religion, and so glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his.

For the hour of his judgment is come] Not of the great and last judgment, but of the government of the Lord Christ, committed to him by God the Father; in which sense the word is used in John v. 22. for now will the time be come, when the kingdoms of this world will be his; and he will take to himself his great power, and reign, in a spiritual manner, in the world; and now also will be his time of judging the dead, or of avenging his people, whose blood has been shed for him, and of his judging the great whore, or of inflicting his judgment upon antichrist and his followers; all which will be under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, to which this vision is cotemporary; see chapters xi. 15, 17, 18, and xvii. 1. and xix. 2.

And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters] God the creator of all things, and not the beasts, nor idols, the works of mens hands.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

And there followed another angel] A second, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac version add; and the Arabic version reads, "and the second angel followed;" another set of Gospel ministers, who will immediately follow upon the former, proclaiming the fall of Babylon, which will be brought about through the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Some think the Waldenses and Albigenses are here designed, who gave a great blow to Babylon, and laid a foundation for her ruin. Others have thought

thought that Luther, and the reformers of his times are intended, who gave a deadly blow to Babylon, and she has been falling ever since: but to me it appears, that a set of ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ are meant, who will not only signify the fall of Babylon to be certain, and near at hand, but will live to see and declare her actual fall, as follows.

Saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city] Which is to be understood not of the world in general, which will not now be come to an end, for all nations of the world are distinguished from this Babylon in the next clause, and is only represented as a city, though a great one; nor of Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen many hundreds of years before this vision; nor is there any likelihood of its being restored, nor any reason to believe that it will evermore be the seat of empire over all the nations and kings of the earth, as the Babylon mentioned in this book is, chapter xvii. 5, 18. though undoubtedly the allusion is to that Babylon, and the very words are used which express the fall of it, and are taken from it; see *Isaiah* xxi. 9. but this is to be understood of Rome, which all along in this book is called the great city, see chapters xi. 8. and xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and not of Rome pagan, for that is fallen already; and the account of the fall of that is given before, at the opening of the sixth seal, and the casting the dragon out of heaven, upon the war there, between Michael and him, though Mr Daubuz is of opinion that this is here meant; but of Rome papal, called *Babylon the great*, chapters xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. and so the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, read here; and the Romish antichrist is so called, because that city was famous for its pride and haughtiness, for its tyranny and cruelty, and for its idolatry; and indeed its name, which signifies *confusion*, well agrees with the papacy, which is a confused mixture of Judaism, paganism, and christianity: so Rome is called Babel in some ancient writings of the Jews (*e*), where some copies read Babel, others read Rome; and Tertullian, who wrote long before the appearance of the Romish antichrist, says (*p*), with our John, Babylon is a figure of the Roman city: and of this it is said, that it is *fallen, is fallen*; which words are repeated for the certain confirmation of it, as matter of fact; for the fall of antichrist will certainly be in the spiritual reign of Christ, in the Philadelphian church-state; see the note on chap. iii. 9. now will Babylon come in remembrance before God, and he will pour out the vials of his

wrath upon her, and will give men an aversion to her; and through the preaching of the Gospel she will fall, just as the walls of Jericho fell at the sounding of the rams horns: the reason of which fall will be,

Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication] By her fornication is meant the idolatry of the church of Rome; so the idolatry of Israel and Judah is often expressed in the Old Testament by fornication and whoredoms; see *Jer.* iii. 6. *Ezek.* xxiii. 2, 3. and the wine of it designs the alluring methods used to draw into it; such as the riches and honours, and pleasures of this world, promised to men, and the great appearances of holiness and religion, the deceiverableness of unrighteousness, the miracles, signs, and lying wonders done by them, by which men are made sottish and stupid, and induced to believe a lie; just as wine intoxicates, and inclines, and excites to lust: and by the *wrath* of it, is meant either the heat of lust unto it, or the wrath of God against them, which is stirred up by it, and now the aggravation of her sin is, that she not only drinks of this wine herself, or commits idolatry, being instigated to it by the allurements of it, though she hereby incurs the displeasure and wrath of God, but she draws all nations into the same idolatrous practices.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

And the third angel followed them] The two preceding ones, and that very quickly; by whom is meant not Luther, and his associates in the reformation, as some think; nor his successors, or the ministers of the Gospel in general from his time till Christ's second coming, as others have thought; but a set of Gospel ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ: the first set of them publish the everlasting Gospel, which leads on to the ruin of antichrist; the second set proclaim the downfall of Rome, and this third set denounce the wrath of God upon all that have professed the popish religion.

Saying with a loud voice] As the first angel did, with like authority and vehemence, in order to strike terror, and express indignation.

If any man worship the beast and his image] Give in to the idolatries of the church of Rome, and embrace, maintain, and defend the popish religion, which bears a resemblance to the worship of the heathens, and is the very image of Rome pagan; see chapter xiii. 4, 12, 15.

(e) Zohar in Num. fol. 103. 4. & Raya Mehlana, apud ibid. in Exod. fol. 49. 3. (*p*) Adv. Judaeos, c. 9. & Adv. Marcion. l. 3. c. 13.

And receive his mark in his forehead, or in his band] Openly profess popery, and swear allegiance to the man of sin, and do all they can to support his interest; see chap. xiii. 16, 17.

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God] Which is a just punishment for their sins; that as such have drank of the wine of the wrath of Rome's fornication, &c. 8. so they shall now drink of the wine of God's wrath; it is usual in scripture to express the punishment God inflicts upon wicked men by his wrath, and by the wine-cup of his fury; and their suffering such punishment, by their drinking of it; see Jer. xxv. 15. Job. xxi. 20. so נִיחָהוּן, "the wine of wrath," is a phrase used by the Jews (q).

Which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation] Sometimes called a cup of fury and of trembling, Isaiah li. 17, 22. and is sometimes said to be full of mixture, Psalm lxxv. 8. of various ingredients of wrath and fury; and the words may be rendered here, "which is mixed without mixture;" and though it seems to carry in it a contradiction, yet is true in different senses; it may be said to be mixed as wine with various sorts, which is the stronger, and sooner inebriates and intoxicates; or in allusion to the cup the Jews gave to malefactors, to stupify them, when going to execution, which had various things put in it for that purpose: see the note on Mark xv. 23. and so designs the several ingredients in the cup of divine indignation, or the several ways in which God expresses his wrath; and yet it is without mixture; it is judgment without mercy, pure wrath, without the least alloy; not so much as a drop of cold water granted, or the least favour shown, or any mitigation of fury for a moment.

And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone] In allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which are now a burning and sulphurous lake, called Asphaltites, and is an example, pattern, and similitude of the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. and hence the beast and false prophets are said to be cast into such a lake, chapter xix. 20. and here their followers will be punished; which is expressive of the horrible torments

of hell, and the dreadful punishment of the anti-christian party there; see Psalm xi. 6. and what will aggravate their misery is, that it will be

In the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb] The latter will be their judge, and will adjudge them to everlasting burnings, and pronounce the sentence on them; and the former will be the executioners of it; they will gather them out, and sever them from the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire, and will be spectators of their punishment, and rejoice at it; and the sight of their power and glory will increase the torment of the sufferers.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever] That is, the smoke of that fire which torments them will for ever arise; or in other words, there will be no end of their torment; hence their misery is called everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, and everlasting destruction, Matt. xxv. 41, 46. 2 Thess. i. 9. and smoke being very troublesome and distressing, is mentioned to set forth the very uncomfortable state of the wicked; and so it is used by Jewish writers: hence we read of עַשְׁן הַגֵּהֶם, "the smoke of hell (r)," with which the eyes of the wicked will be filled in the world to come.

And they have no rest day nor night] The fire of divine wrath which tortures them is never quenched, and the worm of conscience which gnaws them, never dies: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, that the wicked in hell have rest sometimes; they talk of angels blowing away the smoke from them, so that they have rest an hour and a half; and which they say they have three times a day, and whenever Israel says Amen, let his great name be blessed (s); and particularly that hell-fire never burns on the sabbath-day, nor does the smoke of it ascend then, and that the wicked have always rest on that day (t); though sometimes they contradict themselves, and say they never have any rest (u), which is the truth.

(q) Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 4.

(r) Targum in Psalm xxxviii. 20. T. Bab. Bava Batra, fol. 75. 1. Caphtory, fol. 109. 1. (s) Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

(t) Zohar in Exod. fol. 161. 4. & in Lev. fol. 45. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. T. Bab. Saphedim, fol. 65. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 149. 1. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 139. 1.

(u) Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 3. T. Bab. Saphedim, fol. 152. 2.

Who worship the beast and his image, and who-so-ever receiveth the mark of his name] That is, who-ever are the followers of antichrist, or the pro-fessors of the popish religion; so far is salvation from being in the church of Rome, and only there, that there is none in it; and whoever live and die in the profession of popery, shall surely be damned as this passage is true.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Here is the patience of the saints] That which has required their patience, and about which it has been exercised, what they have been patiently waiting for, namely the destruction of antichrist; and now it will be come, and patience will have its perfect work; see chapter xiii. 10.

Here are they that keep the commandments of God] And not the inventions of men, and the traditions of antichrist, but the ordinances of the Gospel, as they were at first delivered, without any adulteration and corruption; and who kept them because they were enjoined by God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory: these are distinguished from the worshippers of the beast, and were preserved throughout the apostacy; these are the witnesses, who will now be risen, and the remnant of the woman's seed, with whom the dragon made war by the beast; and these are the hundred and forty and four thousand who are before described; these will be in a very glorious and comfortable church-state; the word will be purely preached, and the ordinances truly administered, and the doctrines of the Gospel will be heartily embraced and professed: it follows,

And the faith of Jesus] Meaning either the grace of faith, of which Jesus is the object, author, and finisher; and which these saints will have from him, and exercise upon him in a very strong and comfortable manner; and which, and the profession of it, they will hold fast to the end; or else the doctrine of faith, concerning the person, office, and grace of Jesus Christ, the faith once delivered to the saints, which they will have contended for, stood fast in, and now will hold in a pure conscience: these seem to be the words of John, declaring the faith, patience, and obedience of the saints of those times.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest

from their labours; and their works do follow them.

And I heard a voice from heaven] Like that which was heard at Christ's baptism and transfiguration, certifying the truth of what follows, so that that may be depended upon as an undoubted verity.

Saying unto me, Write] Which is a further confirmation of the following sayings being true and faithful; see chapters i. 9. and xix. 9. and xxi. 5.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth] Merely to die is not an happiness, for death is common to all, good and bad; it is a disunion of soul and body, and cannot be in itself desirable; it is the fruit of sin, and has something in it awful and terrible; and though it is the privilege of believers, as it is unforgotten by Christ, yet not as simply and absolutely considered; but to die in the Lord is a blessedness: some render the words, "which die for the Lord;" so the Arabic version, "which die for the faith of the Lord;" and the Ethiopic version, "which die for God;" and so restrain them to the martyrs of Jesus: to suffer death for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, is a gift and an honour, and what glorifies Christ; and there is a glory consequent upon it, which such shall enjoy; but then in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which this passage refers, and after the destruction of antichrist, there will be no more suffering for Christ, no more martyrdoms; wherefore this cannot be the sense of the words: nor do they mean dying in the lively exercise of faith and hope in the Lord; for though it is a happiness so to die, both to persons themselves, and to their friends and relations, yet these are not the only persons that are blessed; there are some who all their life-time are subject to bondage, and go off in the dark, and yet are happy; but to die in the Lord, is to die interested in him, in union to him; which union is not dissolved by death, and which preserves from all condemnation, at death or at judgment, and secures the soul's immediate entrance into happiness, and the resurrection of the body at the last day, and therefore such must be blessed: the phrase *from henceforth*, is differently placed; the Ethiopic version connects it with the word *write*, rendering it, "write now;" and the Vulgate Latin version reads it with the next clause, "hereafter, yea, saith the Spirit;" and so the Latin interpreter of the Syriac version, though that itself seems rather to place it as ours does, and which is rightest; and is to be understood not of the time of John's writing, thenceforward

to the resurrection; for those that died before his time were as happy as those who died after; nor of the time of death, though it is a truth, that from the time of the saints death, and from the very moment of their separation, they are blessed, and are in a state of happiness until the resurrection; but of that period of time which the declarations made by the three preceding angels refer to, from thenceforward, and after the destruction of antichrist, and during the spiritual reign of Christ: and the sense is, that happy will those persons be, that die in Christ within that time, and before the Laodicean church-state takes place; when coldness, lukewarmness, and carnal security will seize upon men, and Christ will come upon them at an unawares; and those sharp and severe times will commence, signified by the harvest and vintage of the earth in the following verses, and which seem to be no other than the end of the world, and the destruction of it; wherefore happy will they be that are got to heaven before that time comes; see *Eal. iv. 1, 2. Isaiah lvii. 1, 2.*

Yea, saith the Spirit] The third witness in heaven, who sets his seal to the truth of what the voice declares, and shews wherein this blessedness will consist.

That they may rest from their labours] Both of body and soul; from all toil of body, and laborious work, from all diseases and distempers of body, and all outward sorrows and calamities men labour under, and are fatigued with in this life; and from all inward troubles, from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, and from all doubts and fears, from their present warfare-state, and all conflicts with their spiritual enemies.

And their works do follow them] They do not go before them, to prepare heaven and happiness for them; nor do they take them along with them, and use them as pleas for their admission into the heavenly glory; but they will follow them, and will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, and will be taken notice of by Christ, and graciously rewarded by him, at his appearing and kingdom. This is directly opposite to the notions of the Jews, who say, that when a man departs this life, his works "go before him," and say unto him, thou hast done so and so, in such a place, and on such a day (w); and that whoever does a good work in this world, it shall "go before him" in the world to come (x); and so they (y) represent good works as saying to a man

when he is about to die, "go in peace; before thou gettest thither אנו מקדים אותך" "we will go before thee," as it is said, *Isaiah lviii. 8. thy righteousness shall go before thee.* Sometimes they say (z) they go along with him at the time of a man's departure: neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones and pearls accompany him, but the law and good works, as it is said, *Prov. vi. 22. when thou goest it shall lead thee, &c.*

14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

And I looked, and behold a white cloud] In this verse is a description of the person principally concerned in the harvest of the earth, hereafter mentioned; by whom is designed not some great potentate or prince, an encourager of the reformation among his subjects; nor an angel in an human shape; nor Martin Luther, as others; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is described by his form, and by his seat, and by what he had on his head, and in his hand.

And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man] So Christ is said to be, chapter i. 13. and in *Dan. vii. 13.* where there is a like vision of him as here, and which refers to the same time; it is a name by which the Messiah is often called, and is expressive of the truth of his human nature, who was found in fashion as a man, and was really one; for his being like to the Son of man, designs reality and truth, and not mere appearance; see *Matt. xiv. 5. John i. 14.* and besides, as this was in vision, it is very properly expressed, for Christ appeared to John in vision like to that human nature in which he is at the right hand of God; and here he is seen sitting upon the white cloud; which shews that he was come to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and was set on one of them, as on a throne; and a white cloud represents the purity, uprightness, and justness of his proceedings in judgment; for which reason he is said to be on a white throne, chapter xx. 11.

Having on his head a golden crown] As an emblem of royal majesty, shewing that his kingdom was now come, the time for him to reign personally with his saints on earth a thousand years; and that it was a very glorious one; and that he should now reign before his ancients gloriously;

(w) T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. (x) T. Bab. Sota, fol.

3. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Nishmat Chayim, fol. 21. 1.

(y) Pirke Eliner, c. 34. & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2, fol. 55. 4.

ously; and that it was pure, solid, and durable; see *Psalm* xxi. 4.

And in his hand a sharp sickle] To reap the earth with, as hereafter, and is expressive of his power as king of saints and judge of the world, to gather all nations before him; for the sickle is used to gather with, as well as to cut down.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

And another angel came out of the temple] Not the holy Spirit, who being God omniscient, knows the day and hour of judgment, which is a secret to men and angels, as Napier thinks; since though he dwells in the church as his temple, yet is never called an angel; nor does this angel represent the souls under the altar, who come out from thence, and importunately desire vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth, the worshippers of the beast, who had shed their blood; but rather the mighty angels who shall descend from heaven with Christ, and who shall be employed by him as reapers, to gather in his elect from the four winds, as well as to bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them; unless a set of Gospel ministers, as before, should be intended, who either by divine revelation, or by the signs of the time being come, and observed by them, will know that the harvest, or end of the world is come; since this angel is said to come out of the temple, the church, which had been measured, and was now opened in heaven, and from whence angels are said to come, chapters xi. 1, 19. and xv. 5, 6.

Crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud] As the first and third angels did, *ch.* 7, 9. denoting great vehemence and importunity.

Thrust in thy sickle, and reap] Which being spoken by an inferior angel, whether this designs the ministering spirits, or preachers of the word, must be understood not as commanding, nor even directing what should be done, but as beseeching and intreating; see *Psalm* cxxxii. 8. Dr Lightfoot thinks, and not without reason, that there is here some allusion to the putting in of the sickle, and reaping the first corn in Judea, at the feast of the passover, by the order of the Sanhedrim which sat in the temple; nor did any reap till they had the word given them, *reap*, by the messengers of the court, called *מַלְאָכֵי הַבֵּית*, "the angels," or messengers "of the Sanhedrim;"

to whom the reaper said, shall I reap; and they say to him, *נָשֵׂא (a), reap*: the reasons follow.

For the time is come for thee to reap] The time of the end of the world, and of the judgment of it, which is fixed by God; and of Christ's coming to judge both quick and dead, and of the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints.

For the harvest of the earth is ripe] The measure of the sins of wicked men will now be filled up, and the afflictions of the saints will be accomplished in them, and the number of God's elect will be compleated in effectual vocation; they will be all called, and so things will be ripe for the second coming of Christ. There seems to be some reference to *Joel* iii. 13. *put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*: the Jewish doctors ask (b), to whom is this said? R. Phineas, in the name of R. Hilkiah says, *לַמַּלְאָכִים*, "to the angels;" so the mighty ones in *ch.* 11. are by Kimchi interpreted of the angels.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth] He put forth, and made use of that power which he had in his hand, in answer to the intreaty of the angel, the time being fully come which was fixed for this great event.

And the earth was reaped] And the harvest of it was got in; reaping and harvest sometimes are used in an ill sense, and design the wrath of God, and his judgments inflicted upon men; see *Isaiah* xvii. 5. *Jer.* li. 33. *Joel* iii. 13. Hence some think, that both this and the vintage following, intend the judgments of God upon antichrist, and that they are cotemporary with the pouring out of the fifth and sixth vials upon the beast and his followers; and the rather, since the destruction of Babylon literally taken, is expressed in such language, *Jer.* li. 33. though these seem to have respect to times after the fall of the Romish Babylon, before declared in *ch.* 8. and most interpreters refer the harvest to the last judgment at the end of the world; and which sense is greatly countenanced, and to be illustrated by the parable of the tares and wheat, in *Matt.* xiii. 30, 39, 41, 42. sometimes these phrases are used in a good sense, and intend the gathering in of souls by the preaching of the Gospel; as there are the appointed weeks of the harvest, so there is a time fixed for the calling and conversion of God's elect; and

(a) *Mish. Menachot*, c. 10. §. 3. par. 2. fol. 92. 1.

(b) *Yalkut Simeoni*,

and when this time is come, and especially to any number of them in any particular place, it is an harvest, as in Galilee and Samaria in the times of Christ, *Matt. ix. 39. John iv. 35.* the reapers are the ministers of the Gospel; such were the apostles of Christ, *John iv. 36—38.* and the sickle is the Gospel, by which not only men are cut to the heart, and cut down, and removed from their old bottom, and principles and practices, but are gathered to Christ, and into his churches; and when large numbers are brought in, it is an harvest-time, as in the times of Christ and his apostles; see *Isaiah ix. 1—3. Acts ii. 41. 2 Cor. ii. 14.* hence some interpreters think that the harvest here has respect to the reformation, which followed upon the preaching of Luther, Calvin, and others, when a large harvest of souls were gathered in, in Germany, France, England, and elsewhere; but rather it may be thought to refer to the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which the preceding visions belong, as we have seen; the earth will be reaped indeed, and a great harvest it will be, when a nation shall be born at once, and the vast multitudes of the Gentiles shall be brought in, as in *Isaiah lvi. 8.* and chapters *xlix. 20.* and *lx. 3—11.* and the rather this may be judged to be the meaning of it, since the passage from whence these phrases are borrowed, respects the bringing again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, *Jos. iii. 1, 12.* though it seems best to understand it of the Lord's wheat harvest at the end of the world, when the wheat of the earth shall be reaped, and gathered into Christ's barn, or garner, or into his and his Father's kingdom; this reaping of the earth is the removing of the saints out of it, not by death, but by the resurrection of them from the dead; for when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, and sit on the white cloud, or throne, the dead in him will rise first, and the living saints will be changed, and both will be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air; so that the earth will be reaped, and be clear of them, and there will be none left in it but the wicked of the world; and what will become of them is declared in the following verses, under the representation of a vintage.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven] It is a strange conceit of Mr Brightman's, that this angel is Thomas lord Cromwell, in the

days of king Henry the eighth, a sincere favourer of pure religion; and that the following angel is Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, a martyr, that had power over fire; and that the vintage here spoken of, refers to the destroying of religious houses, and disposing of abby-lands to other uses; which was done under the king's authority, by the former of these, at the instigation of the latter, when those who were set over that business, made such havoc of the goods of the papists, that their houses seemed to swim in their spoils, as in a river of pressed grapes. Dr Goodwin much better interprets it of God's vengeance upon the carnal protestants and professors of religion; since it is an angel out of the temple that will execute it, and another from the altar, zealous of God's worship, that will provoke to it; and since the wine-press will be troden without the city, the church; and which began in the wars in Germany, in the last age, and will have its full accomplishment when the whole outward court is given to the Gentiles; but how these, who are but a few, when compared with the wicked of the world, should be called the vine of the earth, I see not. Mr Daubuz thinks this vision of the vintage has had, at least in part, its fulfilment in the late wars in the times of queen Anne, the popish countries being them made the seat of war, in which they suffered much; rather they come nearest to the truth of the matter, who take this to be the battle of the great God Almighty, under the sixth vial, chapter *xvi. 14, 16.* fought by the Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who will tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, chapter *xix. 15.* when the beast and false prophet will both be destroyed: but inasmuch as Babylon is before declared to be fallen, *ch. 8.* and since the gathering in of the Lord's wheat at the first resurrection, is designed by the harvest; it is best to understand this vintage of the perdition of ungodly men by fire, at the conflagration of the world, which will be at the beginning of the thousand years reign, and of the gathering of them in at the second resurrection, at the end of it, for the destruction of them in hell, soul and body. And by this angel is meant, not the saints of the most high: for though they may be said to come out of the temple, the church, and shall judge the world, yet they will not be employed in gathering together the wicked, and casting them into the lake of fire, or wine-press of God's wrath; rather the ministering spirits are intended, who are the reapers at the end of the world, and who will gather the wicked, and bind them like tares in bundles, and cast them into the furnace of fire; though it is best to interpret this of

Christ himself, who is often called an angel in scripture, as the angel of God's presence, and the angel of the covenant; and frequently in this book, as in chapters vii. 2. and viii. 3. and x. 1. because, as mediator, he is God's messenger; and he may be said to do that, which he does by others, as instruments, as to gather the vine of the earth, and cast it into the winepress; and he may be said to *come out of the temple which is in heaven*: whether this be understood of heaven itself, which the temple, and especially the most holy place in it, was a figure of; here Christ is, and from hence he is expected to come, and will come at the last day, as judge of all the earth; or of the church of God, for here Christ dwells, and grants his gracious and spiritual presence until his second and personal coming, with all his saints: and now he will have them all with him, both quick and dead, and will be personally in his temple, the church, in the great congregation of the righteous, and out from among them will he display his power in the destruction of the wicked; and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since none but a divine person ever trod the winepress of God's wrath; see *Isaiah* lxiii. 1—3. *Rev.* xix. 13, 15, 16. to which may be added what follows,

He also having a sharp sickle] The same who is described as like to the son of man, on a white cloud, with a golden crown on his head, and such a sickle in his hand, *v.* 14. which is expressive of the same judiciary power and authority.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

And another angel came out from the altar] Where are the souls of the martyrs of Jesus, chap. vii. 9. and whom this angel is thought by some to represent, in his address to him that had the sharp sickle, crying for vengeance on the wicked of the earth, who had shed their blood: the allusion seems to be to the altar of burnt-offerings, where the sacrifices were slain, and on which they were burnt with fire; and which was an emblem of the strict justice of God, shewing, that those persons, for whom these sacrifices were offered, deserved to be treated in like manner; and here the angel coming from thence signifies, that he came on the behalf of the justice of God, entreating that he, to whom vengeance belonged, would execute it upon all the ungodly, who were

ripe for judgment: and hence it is further said of him,

Which had power over fire] Whether the angels, as they have presided over particular kingdoms and states, *Dan.* x. 26, 27. preside over the elements, since this angel had power over fire, and another angel is called the angel of the waters, chapter xvi. 5. may be considered. According to the Jews (c) there are מלאכי אש, "angels of fire," and מלאכי מים, "and angels of the waters;" particularly it is said (d), that Gabriel is, שר אל אש, "the prince of fire," or "that has power over fire," and Jurkemo is, שר הברק, "prince of hail," or has power over it: however, fire is to be taken here, not for the Spirit, and his gifts, which not a created angel, but Christ only, has a power over, to baptize with; nor the Gospel, nor martyrdom, but rather the wrath of God, which in scripture is often compared to fire, of which this angel was an executioner; and indeed here it may be referred, both literally to the burning of the world, and the wicked in it, in which the angels may be concerned, who will descend with Christ in flames of fire, taking vengeance on the wicked; and figuratively to hell-fire, and the destruction of the wicked in it, who will be cast into it by the angels of God.

And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle] As in *v.* 15. expressing like vehemence and importunity,

Saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle] Not commanding or directing, but entreating as before.

And gather the clusters of the vine of the earth] Not the vine of God's planting, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the church of Christ; but the vine of the earth, of wicked and earthly men, whose vine is of the vine of Sodom, &c. *Deut.* xxxii. 32, 33. and which is spread over the whole earth; a wild vine, whose grapes are gall, clusters bitter, and their wine the poison of dragons; and to such a vine the wicked are compared, for their emptiness and unfruitfulness, their uselessness and unprofitableness, and for their being fit fuel for everlasting burnings; see *Ezek.* xv. 2—5. And the clusters of it may denote the great multitude of the wicked now to be cut down, gathered in, and destroyed, for the reason given,

For her grapes are fully ripe] Their wickedness very great, their iniquity full, the measure of their sins filled up, and they fitted for destruction, and ripe for ruin; see *Jos.* iii. 13. Some understand

(c) Sopher Raziell, fol. 39. 2. Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 17.

(d) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. so Kimchi in *Ezek.* ix. 2.

derstand this of the degenerate church of Rome, and the destruction of it; see *Rev.* xix. 15.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth] Before upon the earth, when the harvest was gathered in, the wheat being on the earth, but not belonging to it; but here into the earth, the vine being the vine of the earth, rooted in it, and natural to it.

And gathered the vine of the earth] The Arabic version reads, "of the whole earth;" in like manner as the tares in the parable are said to be gathered, and bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, which, as here, intends the destruction of the wicked, at the end of the world: this vine may be said to be cut down at the burning of the world, and to be gathered at the second resurrection, as the wheat harvest of the saints will be at the first resurrection.

And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God] The same with the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so often mentioned in this book: the torments of the wicked will lie in the wrath of God being poured forth upon them, and into them, which will be that fire that cannot be quenched, and that worm that never dies; and this is signified by the squeezing of grapes in a winepress, as God's judgments in this world sometimes are, *Isaiah* lxiii. 3, 6. and which will be very heavy and intolerable, since this winepress will be trod by the Lord God Almighty: and it is said to be a great one, as it must needs be, to hold the vine of the whole earth, or all the wicked of the world, who will be like the sand of the sea, innumerable; and this will be big enough for them all, and they will all be cast into it at once. Tophet is deep and large, *Isaiah* xxx. 33.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

And the winepress was trodden without the city] The beloved city, the new Jerusalem, into which none of the wicked will enter, and without which are dogs, &c. *Rev.* xx. 9. and chapters xxi. 27. and xxii. 15. The allusion may be, as Dr Lightfoot thinks, to the olive-presses, which were with-

out the city of Jerusalem, from whence Gethsemane had its name, whither our Lord went, and where his sorrows began the night he was betrayed; hell is sometimes expressed by outer darkness, and said to be far off from heaven, and between the one and the other a great gulf is fixed, the distance is considerable; hence men are said to go forth to behold the miseries of the wicked; see *Matthew* xxii. 13. *Luke* xvi. 23, 26. *Isaiah* lxvi. 24.

And blood came out of the winepress] Alluding to the juice squeezed out of grapes, called the blood of grapes, *Gen.* xlix. 11.

Even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs] Which is only an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the largeness and universality of the destruction of the wicked, and the impossibility of their escaping it. In like manner the Jews express a great slaughter of men; so of the slaughter at Bithur, by Adria, they say (a), they went on slaying, *ברוך ששקע חסוק עד ששקע חסוק*, "until a horse plunged in blood up to his nostrils," and the blood ran four miles into the sea; which is not to be understood literally, but as expressing a prodigious effusion of blood: and as to the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, perhaps there may be an allusion to the measure of the land of Israel, and the common notion of it among the Jews, who make it to be the square of four hundred *parse* (f); hence they often speak of the land of Israel shaking and moving four hundred *parse*, upon some extraordinary occasions (g); and a *parse* contained four miles (h), so that four hundred *parse* made a thousand and six hundred miles; and if miles and furlongs are the same, in which sense only the land of Israel could be so large, here is the exact space; for Jerom (i), who was an inhabitant of it, says, it was scarce 160 miles in length, of which agrees R. Menachem (k); and it may be observed, that the Arabic version renders the words, "by the space of a thousand and six hundred miles." The Ethiopic version, very wrongly, reads, "sixteen furlongs."

CHAP. XV.

This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, and contains a vision of the seven angels in heaven that should do this work, of a chorus of harpers on this occasion, and of the

(a) T. Hierol. Tsanioth, fol. 69. 1.

(f) T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Gloss. in *ibid.*

(g) T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 32. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2.

(h) T. Bab. Pesechim, fol. 93. 2. Gloss. in *ibid.*

(i) Ad. Dardanum, fol. 22. l. tom. 3.

(k) In Gen. fol. 69.

(f) T. Bab. Bava

(g) T. Bab. Megilla,

(h) T. Bab. Pesechim, fol. 93. 2.

(i) Ad. Dardanum, fol. 22. l. tom. 3.

(k) In Gen. fol. 69.

the same seven angels coming out of the temple, and receiving the vials, in order to execute their commission. The vision of the seven angels, having the seven last plagues, so called because filled up with the wrath of God, is said to be a sign, great and marvellous, *ch. i.* a sea of glass, mingled with fire, is seen, with persons standing on it, described by the victory they had got over the beast, his image, mark, and number of his name; by having the harps of God in their hands, and by the song they sung, called the song of Moses, and of the Lamb; in which they ascribe to Christ deity, dominion over the saints, omnipotence, justice, truth, and holiness; give him glory, celebrate his works, commend his ways, and suggest that he ought to be the object of the fear and worship of all, *ch. 2-4.* Next the temple in heaven is seen opened, out of which come the seven angels, described by the place they came from, the temple; by what they had, the seven plagues; by their habit, clothed in pure white linen; and by their golden girdles about their breasts, *ch. 5, 6.* to whom one of the four living creatures, made mention of in chapter iv. delivers to them seven golden vials full of divine wrath, upon which the temple is filled with smoke from the Lord; so that it was not possible for any one to enter into it, until these seven plagues were ended, *ch. 7, 8.*

AND I saw another sign in heaven, a great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous] This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, as chapter i. is to the sending of the seven epistles, and chapter iv. to the seven seals and seven trumpets: the vision is called a *sign*, because what was seen was significative of future events; a sign of the coming of Christ, of his kingdom, and of the destruction of antichrist; and it is said to be a *sign in heaven*, where John was called up, and where he had his visions; and it was *another*, a different one from that in chapter xii. i. which represented the downfall of paganism, but this the downfall of popery; and it is a very *great* one, it is expressive of great things, as the fall of Babylon the great, or the judgment of the great whore, and the great glory of the church and kingdom of Christ; and it is *marvellous*, for the two grand events it respects are very wonderful; as that antichrist, who was once in such great power, should be destroyed, and that by such weak means, in the esteem of

men, as the preaching of the Gospel, which is no less marvellous than the fall of Jericho by the sound of rams horns; and that the church, which was in so low an estate in the wilderness, for the space of 1260 days or years, should become so glorious. The vision follows,

Seven angels having the seven last plagues] These are not the same angels that blew the seven trumpets, for they are not cotemporary with them, but are more likely the same with those in the preceding chapter; though they seem rather to be different from them: if these were angels literally understood, their having plagues is no objection to their being good angels, since such are often the executioners of God's wrath; and that these were good ones, appears from one of them talking with John, and shewing him the judgment of antichrist, and another the bride, the Lamb's wife, and her glory, chapters xvii. i. and xxi. 9. though they seem rather to be the ministers of the Gospel, since they are said to come out of the temple, *ch. 6.* and since the destruction of antichrist will be by the breath of Christ's mouth, or by the preaching of the Gospel; unless it should be thought that members of churches are designed, since these angels receive their vials from one of the four living creatures, *ch. 7.* or preachers of the word; and may denote some very principal men, as kings, who will now be come to Zion, and be members of Gospel churches, and will be the nursing fathers and protectors of them; and these will hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire; but of these angels, see more on *ch. 6.* They are said to have *the seven last plagues*; that is, in their vials; for these seven plagues are the same with the seven vials of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon antichrist; and are no other than so many steps, ways and means, by which God will bring on, and finish his destruction: these are called the *last* plagues, because they will be in the last days: there have been plagues before, as at the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues of Egypt, and the downfall of several monarchies and kingdoms, and of paganism in the Roman empire; but these will fall upon antichrist, and will be the last upon him, for they will issue in his utter ruin; they will be the last plagues upon the earth; there will be no other after them, but the conflagration of the world, and the general destruction of the wicked in hell. These plagues are the same with the third woe, and are an explanation of it, and belong to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which brings in the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of Christ, and the time of God's wrath upon the nations, or Gentiles, the papists, and of judging the dead, and destroying them

them that destroyed the earth, chapter xi. 15, 18. for these plagues do not follow upon the harvest and vintage, nor has this vision any respect to them, nor to be connected with the preceding chapter, but with chap. xi. and gives an enlarged view, both of the glory of Christ's kingdom, and of the ruin of antichrist, by these plagues, called the last.

For in them is filled up the wrath of God] Upon the beast, and his followers.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire] Not baptism, but rather the blood of Christ, which may be compared to a sea, for its abundant virtue and efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and to a sea of glass, since in it are clearly seen free justification, full pardon, peace, and reconciliation; and may be said to be mingled with fire, being attended in the application of it with the Spirit of God, whose gifts and graces are sometimes signified by fire: and so according to others, this sea may represent the pure church of God, as washed in the blood of the Lamb; compared to a sea for the multitude of which it consists, and to a sea of glass, because of the transparency and clearness of its principles and practices, and may be said to be mingled with the fire of love and zeal: most interpreters understand it of the world, which is like a sea for the multitude of its inhabitants; and sometimes to a troubled one, because of the restlessness and disquietude of the wicked in it; but here it is like a sea of glass, for the quiet, and peace, and rest it shall be in at this time; though it is commonly said to be like such a sea, partly because all things are manifest, and open to an omniscient God; and partly because of its outward splendor and the brittleness, frailty, and transitoriness of it; and to be mixed with fire, either because of the light of the Gospel, and the operation of the Spirit in the hearts of some that are in it, or because of the afflictions and persecutions of the saints in it; though it seems best of all to understand it of the Gospel, as in chapter iv. 6. see the note there; and which may be said to be mingled with fire, either because of the powerful and clear demonstration of the Spirit that attends it to the minds of many, or that heat of persecution which is raised by it; see Luke xii. 49. or rather it denotes the purity of the

Gospel in those times, its general spread, and the great zeal and fervor of the professors of it, since persecution will now be at an end.

And them that had gotten the victory over the beast] Over antichrist, signified by the beast, that rose up out of the sea, and out of the earth, chap. xiii. 1, 11. and which are the same, and were but one, though in different forms, as from hence appears: the beast first overcame the saints, by slaying of them; and they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, by preaching and professing the Gospel, by their close and constant adherence to it, and by dying for it.

And over his image] Caused by him to be made to the first beast; and is no other than the popish religion, which bears a resemblance to paganism; and which the saints may be said to get the victory over, by standing out against it, opposing and refuting it, not giving into it, but bearing their testimony against it.

And over his mark] Refusing to receive it either in their forehead, or in their right hand; that is, either to swear allegiance to him, or profess his religion. This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

And over the number of his name] That is, they would not own his supremacy and authority, nor embrace his doctrines, nor obey his orders; nor be reckoned his followers in any form or shape; see chapter xiii. 15—18. These conquerors John saw.

Stand on the sea of glass] Which is applied to the blood of Christ, shows, that these confessors were purified by it, and were more than conquerors through it; that they were come out of great tribulation, and had washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and were just come up from the washing, and stood upon, or rather, by or "near the sea," as the Arabic version renders it, in allusion to the priests at the molten sea, in the temple: but if the world is meant by the sea, their standing upon it denotes their victory and triumph over it by faith, their having it under their feet, and their contempt of it; but rather, since the Gospel is intended, it may denote their solid standing upon the doctrines of it, the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and their steadfast continuance in them, and faithful abiding by them, whereby they got the victory over antichrist.

Having the harps of God] Their hearts in an excellent frame, tuned and disposed by God to sing his praise, and set forth his glory; having them filled with spiritual joy and gladness, and with

with great thankfulness, on account of their victory, the happy state of Christ's church, and the destruction of its enemies: the allusion is to the people of Israel, Moses and the men, and Miriam and the women with timbrels and dances standing on the sea-shore, when the Egyptians were destroyed, singing the praises of God; as is still more manifest from the following verse.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God] Not that in *Deut.* xxxii. 1. but that in *Exod.* xv. 1. and the sense is, either that they observed the law of Moses, which he as a servant in the Lord's house faithfully delivered, and kept it distinct from the Gospel, and did not blend them together, as in the times before; or rather, that they sung a song like that of Moses, and on a like occasion. Pharaoh was the very picture of the pope of Rome; his oppression and cruel usage of the Israelites represent the tyranny and cruelty of the Romish antichrist; and the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red sea, which occasioned the song of Moses, were an emblem of God's bringing his people out of antichristian bondage, and of the ruin of antichrist, upon which this song is sung; and Rome, in this book, is called Egypt, chap. xi. 8. The Jews have a notion, that the very song of Moses itself will be sung in the world to come, in the days of the Messiah; for they say, there are in it the times of the Messiah, and of Gog and Magog, and of the resurrection of the dead, and the world to come (1). And this song was sung by the Levites in the daily service (2).

And the song of the Lamb] The Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of men; the same song of which mention is made, chapters v. 9. and xiv. 3. the song of redeeming love, a song of praise for the blessings of grace which come thro' him, and of deliverance by him.

Saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty] Christ is in this song addressed as a divine person, as Lord of all, God over all, blessed for ever, the Almighty God, as his works declare him to be; his works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are all great and marvellous, particularly the accomplishment of

the glorious things spoken of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, which are here designed.

Just and true are thy ways thou King of saints] Made so by his Father, and acknowledged by all his people, and especially at this time when his kingdom will more visibly and gloriously appear: the Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, and Arabic version, read "King of nations," as in *Jer.* x. 7. from whence this, and the beginning of the next verse seem to be taken; the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, "King of ages," an everlasting king, as in *Jer.* x. 10. but the generality of copies read as we have it: and the ways of this King are just and true; his purposes, decrees, and counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; all his proceedings towards his own people, his subjects, are mercy and truth; his precepts and ordinances, his worship and service, are just and true, in opposition to every false way; and all his judgments upon his enemies, which are intended, are just, being what their sins deserved, and are true, being agreeable to his word and threatnings.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Who shall not fear thee, O Lord] At this time the people of the Jews shall seek after Christ, and fear him and his goodness; the forces of the Gentiles shall be brought into Zion, whose heart shall then fear, and be enlarged; the fear of the Lord will be in all places, and in all men, both Jews and Gentiles, *Hos.* iii. 5. *Isaiah* lx. 5.

And glorify thy name?] By ascribing all divine perfections to him, giving him divine worship and adoration, and attributing the whole of salvation to him, and the glory of all that is done for his church, and against its enemies.

For thou only art holy] Not only perfectly holy, as man, but infinitely and essentially holy, as God, and the fountain of holiness to his people, as mediator: this character seems to be given in opposition to antichrist, who arrogantly assumes the title of holiness to himself, when it only belongs to Christ.

For all nations shall come and worship before thee] The Gospel shall now be preached to all nations, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of it; the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and his kingdom shall be to the ends of the earth, and all people shall obey him: the words

(1) Zohar in *Exod.* fol. 23. 2. & 74. 3, 4. & 25. 2. & T. Bab. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 91. 2. (2) Maimon. *Tamidin*, c. 6. §. 9.

words seem to be taken, with some other phrases before used, out of *Psalms* lxxxvi. 8—10.

For thy judgments are made manifest] Or “thy justifications,” or “righteousnesses;” the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by it, will now be most clearly revealed, and generally received, in opposition to the popish doctrine of merits, works of supererogation, &c. or the judgments of the king of saints upon antichrist, who will now avenge their blood, which he has shed; see chapters xvii. 1. and xix. 2. and the justice and righteousness of his proceedings against the man of sin will be notorious and manifest to all, and be acknowledged, as in chapters xvi. 5, 6. and xix. 1, 2.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

And after that I looked] That is, after John had seen the above vision, he looked again, and saw what follows.

And, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened] This does not refer to heaven itself, the antitype of the holy of holies, which is opened by the blood of Christ, by which he himself has entered, and his people have boldness to enter now by faith, and where their souls always enter upon their departure from their bodies; for of this temple cannot be said what is in *1*. 8. nor to the Jerusalem state, or the most glorious state of the church on earth, during the thousand years reign; for in that their will be no temple, chap. xxi. 22. much less to any material temple on earth; the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed before this vision was, and is never to be rebuilt; nor will there be any third temple, as the Jews vainly expect: but to the church of God in the spiritual reign of Christ, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and designs the same thing as in chap. xi. 19. and this is to be understood as what will be, not before, but after the seven angels have poured out their vials; for till they have fulfilled the seven plagues, there is no entering into the temple for smoke, *1*. 8. and besides, it was *after these things*; after John had seen the seven angels, with the seven last plagues, *1*. 1. that he beheld the temple opened. The church is called *the temple*, in allusion to Solomon’s temple, because of its builder, materials, situation, magnificence, strength, holiness, and use; see the note on *2 Cor.* vi. 16. and *the tabernacle*, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which was before the temple, because God dwells in it, as he did in that; and because like that it is moveable, and but for a while; and points at this

VOL. V.

church-state, which will not always be so, but change and sink into the Laodicean state: and it is called *the tabernacle of the testimony*, as that was; the testimony was the law, or the two tables of stone, so called, because they testified what was the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and these being put into the ark, were a testimony of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, and were a witness against them, when they transgressed them, *Deut.* xxxi. 26, 27. and over these were the mercy-seat, and cherubim, as a testimony of the divine presence; and the law being put into the ark, hence the ark was called the ark of the testimony, and that being placed in the tabernacle, that was called the tabernacle of the testimony, or of witness, *Numb.* i. 50. *Acts* vii. 44. and all these were types of, and came to signify Christ, and the covenant of grace, the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; so that by the opening of the temple, &c. is meant a free exercise of the true religion, a setting up of Gospel churches according to the original plan, a keeping of the ordinances, as they were first delivered, and a more clear discovery of Gospel truths: it is the same with the open door in the Philadelphian church-state, chap. iii. 8. as well as that at this time there will be a full manifestation of the judgments of God upon antichrist: the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word *behold*.

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

And the seven angels came out of the temple] By which it appears, that they are such who are of, or belong to the church of Christ; and are either ministers, or members of churches, who will be the executioners of God’s wrath, upon the beast, and his followers; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, “out of heaven.”

Having the seven plagues] That is, they were appointed to inflict them, and were preparing and furnishing for it, and quickly had orders to do it: just the number of the plagues of Egypt, in *Psalms* lxxviii. 44—51.

Clothed in pure and white linen] In which habit angels have been used to appear, as at our Lord’s resurrection and ascension, and is by some thought to be expressive of the purity and holiness of angels; but rather saints are meant, who appear in the habit of priests, being all made kings and priests; and denotes their being clothed with the pure and spotless robe of Christ’s righteousness, which is fine linen, clean and white, and the

4 G

righte-

righteousness of the saints, chap. xix. 8. and also their spiritual joy in their present situation, and in the view of the destruction of antichrist, their sackcloth being put off, in which they, the witnesses, before appeared. So the linen garment of the high priest was, as Philo the Jew says (*n*), made of "fine linen, *καθαυλατος*, most pure." The Alexandrian copy, and some copies of the Vulgate Latin version, and some exemplars mentioned by Andreas Cæsariensis, an ancient commentator on this book, read, "clothed with a stone, pure and white;" as if they were arrayed in garments of stone, which is not likely; unless reference is had to the stone *Asbestos*, of an iron colour, found, as Pliny says (*o*), in the mountains of Arcadia, of which linen was made, called *Asbestinum*, and of that garments; which were so far from being consumed by fire, that they became clean and brighter by it; or to the Carystian stone, which the inhabitants of Carystus used to comb, spin, and weave, and make carpets of (*p*).

And having their breasts girded with golden girdles] Such an one as Christ himself was girded with, chap. i. 13. and this some understand of the love, which the breasts of angels are filled with towards the saints, and their readiness to perform all good offices to them, and to execute the judgments of God upon their enemies, whenever they have orders: but since these angels come out of the temple, and members of Gospel churches seem designed, rather this is to be understood either of the grace of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, which receives the righteousness of Christ, puts it on, and girds it about the believer; or of love, the love of God and Christ, which encompass the saints about, and constrain them, and engage them in fervent love to them, and one another; or of the girdle of truth, *Eph. vi. 14.* which is near and close to them, and which keeps them close to Christ; nor can they depart totally and finally from him, or that; or in general, this may denote their strength and readiness for what service they shall be called to; see *Luke xii. 35, 36.* 1 *Pet. i. 13.*

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

And one of the four beasts] Or living creatures:

(*n*) De Somnii, p. 597. (*o*) Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 10.
(*p*) Pancirol. rer. memorab. par. 1. tit. 4. & Salmuth in ibid. Plin. l. 19. c. 1. Turneb. Adversar. l. 23. c. 1. Schotti Thaumaturg. l. 2. §. 10. p. 118.

now we hear of them, as of the four and twenty elders, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet, chapter xi. 16. with which this vision is cotemporary; these living creatures are the ministers of the Gospel; see the note on chapter iv. 6. and this was one of the first of them, who was like a lion, for fortitude and courage, and whose voice was as the noise of thunder, chapters iv. 7. and vi. 1. and so fitly represents those ministers who shall give out the vials of God's wrath; see *Ezek. x. 7.* not any particular person is designed; who shall be at this time; and much less Luke the Evangelist, as lord Napier thinks; nor Peter, who prophesied of the last time, 2 *Peter iii. 10, 11.* as Grotius; but a set of Gospel ministers, comparable to one of the living creatures John had before seen; of whom it is said, that they

Gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever] These seven vials are for the seven last plagues to be put into, and out of which they are to be taken, or poured, and inflicted; see chap. xxi. 9. hence it appears, that the seven plagues, and the wrath of God; are the same thing, and both design God's judgments upon antichrist; and these being expressed by *vials*, which are measures, and large ones, shew the large abundance, and plentiful effusion of God's wrath, and the secret, sudden, and irresistible power of it; and yet that it will be poured out in measure, according to righteous judgment, and therefore it is put into vials; and these golden ones, expressive of the purity, holiness, and justice of the divine proceedings: and it will be very terrible; it will be, not the wrath of men, but of God, and a cup of the fierceness of his wrath; it will be the wrath of the living God, of him that lives for ever, and as he is, such will his wrath be; it will continue for ever, for his wrath will issue in the everlasting destruction of antichrist; so the wrath of God is signified by a wine-cup of fury, *Jer. xxv. 15.* and that destruction, and those plagues which God designed to bring upon Pharaoh, are by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum on *Gen. xl. 12.* called, *כוס יין זעם*, "a vial of wrath," which he should drink of: and in the pouring out of these seven vials, there is in some of them a manifest allusion to the plagues of Egypt. So the *cup of trembling* in *Isaiah li. 17.* is by the Targumists called, *כוס*, "a vial," and also "the cup of fury," *י*. 22. and that these vials were not small narrow-mouthed vessels, but large broad-mouthed ones, and more properly basins or bowls, is manifest from the use of the word with Jewish writers. The dishes on which the loaves of the shew-bread were set, each of which loaves was

ten hands breadth long, and five broad (g), are by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on *Exodus* xxv. 29. *Numbers* iv. 7. called, מִלֵּי, "vials;" and so the chargers offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, *Numb.* vii. 13, 84, 85. are, by the same, rendered "vials," which weighed 130 shekels; and so the silver bowl they offered, is, by Josephus (r), called a "vial:" the bowls in *Amos* vi. 6. are, by the Targum there, said to be "silver vials." The lordly dish brought by Jael to Sisera, *Judges* v. 25. the Targum calls "the vial" of the mighty ones; and the earthen vessels used at the trial of the suspected wife, and at the cleansing of the leper, are both by Jewish writers said to be "vials (s)." Now these vials were given to the seven angels by one of the living creatures, the ministers of the word; from whence it seems that these angels design members of churches, as distinct from ministers; and may intend civil magistrates, and very principal ones, as kings of the earth, who in this state of things, and times, will belong to the churches, and will be the instruments of destroying antichrist; and these vials may be said to be given to them by the ministers, since they will execute this vengeance in consequence of their prayers, and the churches, called vials full of odours, chap. v. 8. and because these great men will be stirred up by the ministers of the Gospel, and by their ministrations, to do this work; see chapter xviii. 4—6.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

And the temple was filled with smoke] Not with the smoke of false doctrine and superstition, that comes out of the bottomless pit, this from God, chap. ix. 1. and besides, Gospel churches will grow purer and purer, while the seven angels are pouring out the vials: but rather this may be understood of judicial blindness and hardness of heart, upon the antichristian party, which will come upon them from God in righteous judgment; so that they will not be reformed by the plagues, and vials of wrath, nor repent of their sins; but blaspheme God, who has power over the plagues, and so shall not be able to enter into the temple: or else this may design God's powerful and gracious presence in his church, in allusion to the cloud which filled the tabernacle, so

that Moses could not enter; and which filled the temple, so that the priests could not minister, *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. 1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11. since this is said to be

From the glory of God, and from his power] Whose presence is the glory in the midst of his church, and a covert, a protection and defence to the saints, so that none can come in to the temple to hurt them; see *Isaiah* iv. 5, 6. or rather this intends "the smoke of the anger of God," as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which is intolerable; and it may have respect not only to the wrath of God, which is insupportable, but to that great affliction which will befall the saints in those times, through the last struggle of the beast; called the earthquake, and the hour of temptation, and a time of trouble, as never the like was, and which will be shortened for the elect sake.

And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled] None of the antichristian party will attempt to enter in, because of their blindness and obduracy; nor can they get in to do any mischief, because the glorious and powerful presence of God is a defence against them: and this may also have some respect to the darkness of God's judgments, which will not be clearly manifest, until these seven plagues are accomplished; till that time God's judgments on antichrist will remain a great deep, and be unsearchable; there will be no entering into the temple, so as fully to understand them, which is meant by going into the sanctuary of God, *Psalms* lxxiii. 17. and this makes the interpretation of the pouring out of these vials, in the next chapter, very difficult.

CHAP. XVI.

This chapter gives an account of the pouring out of the seven vials by the angels; their orders for it are in *vs.* 1. The first angel pours out his vial on the earth, the effect of which is a noisome and grievous sore upon the followers of antichrist, and the worshippers of his image, *v.* 2. The second pours out his upon the sea, the events of it are, the sea became blood, and every living creature in it died, *v.* 3. The third pours out his upon the rivers and fountains of water, which thereby became blood; upon which the angel of the waters applauds the justice of God, declaring the righteousness of his judgments, and giving a reason for it; and which is confirmed by another angel from the altar, *v.* 4—7. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the sun, the effects of which are scorching men with heat, their blasphemy against

(g) *Misn. Menachot*, c. 11. *§.* 4, 5. (r) *Antiq.* 1. 3. c. 8. *§.* 10. (s) *Misn. Sota*, c. 2. *§.* 2. Joseph. *Antiq.* 1. 3. c. 11. *§.* 6. *Misn. Negaim*, c. 10. *§.* 1.

against God, and impenitence, *ch.* 8, 9. The fifth pours out his on the seat of the beast, the consequences of which are darkness in his kingdom, men gnawing their tongues because of their pains, their blasphemy of the name of God because of them, and their impenitence, *ch.* 10, 11. The sixth angel pours out his on the river Euphrates, and what followed upon it are, the drying up of that river to make way for the kings of the east; three unclean spirits are seen, described by their original, coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet; by their form like frogs; by their internal nature, spirits of devils; by their works doing miracles; by the errand they are sent, and go upon, to gather the kings of the earth to the battle of God Almighty, which they succeed in; but before this is done, a declaration is made of the suddenness of Christ's coming, exciting the saints to watchfulness, and to keep their garments, that they might not be naked, and exposed to shame, *ch.* 12—16. Then the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, the consequences of which are, a voice from heaven declaring it is done; other voices, thunders, lightnings, and an earthquake; a rupture of the great city into three parts; the fall of other cities; the remembrance of Babylon before God; the flight of every island and mountain, and a great hail storm, which causes men to blaspheme God, *ch.* 17—21.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

And I heard a great voice out of the temple]. The church, which in the preceding chapter is said to be opened; this was either the voice of God, whose temple the church is, and where he dwells, and who has power over these plagues, *ch.* 9. and who, when he is about to bring judgments on the earth, is said to roar out of Zion, *Joel* iii. 16. or of Christ, who is always in the midst of his church and people, and whose voice is as the voice of many waters; see *ch.* 15. or it may be of one of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, in and by whom Christ often speaks; and the rather, since one of these gave the seven angels the golden vials of the wrath of God, they are now bid to pour out.

Saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth]. For though these angels had the seven last plagues to inflict, and the seven vials of God's wrath to

pour out, and were in a readiness to do it, yet they did not move without an order, which is here given them; and they are bid to go their ways, from the temple, the church, where they were, and of which they were members, to the several parts of the antichristian empire; and there pour out all the wrath and vengeance of God upon his enemies, and theirs, and leave nothing behind, but give them the dregs of every cup of his fury: the earth here is to be taken in a larger sense than in the following verse, and includes the land and sea, the fountains and rivers, and even the ambient air, and also the sun in the firmament, as the pouring out of these vials upon them shew; and designs the whole apostate church, consisting of earthly men, all the inhabitants of the earth, that worship the beast. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read, "the seven vials of the wrath of God;" these seven vials are not cotemporary, much less the same with the seven trumpets; there is indeed a likeness between them in some things, especially in the first four; for as the first four trumpets affect the earth, the sea, the fountains, and rivers of water, and the sun, so the first four vials are poured out on the same, and that in the same order; first on the earth, and then on the sea, &c. and which will give some light, and be a direction to observe the several parts of the antichristian empire, which will suffer by these vials, and the order in which their ruin will proceed; and as the trumpets were so many gradual steps to the ruin of the Roman empire, eastern and western, when become christian, so these vials are so many gradual steps to, and which issue in the ruin of both the eastern and western antichrist; though they do not respect the same things, nor the same times: the trumpets respect the Roman empire as christian, under the government of emperors, after the downfall of paganism in it; and the vials respect the antichristian powers in their several branches, under the Pope and Turk. Antichrist did not appear until the fifth trumpet sounded, whereas the first vial is poured out upon his followers and worshippers, *ch.* 2. from whence it is a clear point, that the first trumpet, and the first vial, cannot be cotemporary; and the same judgment may be made of the rest: and it may be further observed, that these vials are only poured out on the enemies of God and of Christ, and of his church and people; for no wrath can be poured out upon the saints, not the least drop of it can fall upon them; this would not be consistent with God's everlasting love to them, with the satisfaction of Christ made for them, nor with the blessings of justification,

tion, pardon, adoption, &c. bestowed on them; not but that they may meet with trouble in the time of these vials, through the wars that will be in the world, and through the struggles of the beast of Rome, especially its last, which will be the hour of temptation, and that time of trouble than which never was the like; yet all will work for, and issue in their good, and they will rejoice in God's righteous judgments; the blow will be upon antichrist, the vengeance of God will fall upon those that have the mark of the beast, and the worshippers of his image, upon the seat of the beast, even upon Babylon, and the whole Romish jurisdiction, as appears from *ŷ. 2, 10, 19, 20.* and also upon the Turkish empire, and all the nations engaged in the interest of both Pope and Turk, *ŷ. 12—14, 16.* and it is easy to observe, that there is in many of these vials an allusion to the plagues of Egypt; in the first, *ŷ. 2.* to the plague of boils, *Exodus ix. 8, 11.* in the second and third, *ŷ. 3, 4.* to that of turning the waters of Egypt into blood, *Exodus vii. 19—21.* in the fourth, *ŷ. 10.* to the darkness that was over all the land of Egypt, *Exodus x. 21, 23.* and in the fifth there is a manifest reference to the frogs that distressed the Egyptians, *Exodus viii. 5, 6.* and in the seventh, to the plague of hail, *Exod. ix. 23—26.* and they have much the same effect, even the hardening of those on whom they fall, being far from being brought to repentance by them, *ŷ. 9, 11.* and this confirms the application of the vials to the destruction of Rome, which is spiritually called Egypt, *Rev. xi. 8.* and may assure that they will issue in the ruin of antichrist, and in the salvation of God's people, as the plagues of Egypt did in the destruction of Pharaoh, and in the deliverance of the children of Israel; and may also lead us to conclude, that there will be a like quick execution of the one, as of the other; for as the plagues of Egypt came very quick one after another, so it seems as if the pouring out of these vials would be in like manner; the angels receive them together, and have their orders at the same time; and they go forth immediately, one after another, if not together, to the respective parts where they are to pour them forth, and which they do directly; see chapter xviii. 8. Moreover, these vials will affect antichrist both with respect to his civil and ecclesiastic capacity, or both in temporals and spirituals, and both antichrists, eastern and western: whether they are begun to be poured out or no, is a question. I am ready to think they are not, because they seem to me to refer to the seventh trumpet, which as yet has not sounded, and are the same with the wrath of God, and the time of the judging the

dead, or avenging the blood of the saints, which will be come when that sounds, chapter xi. 18. Besides, the outer court is not entirely given to the Gentiles, nor the witnesses slain, which must be before this time of wrath upon antichrist; not but that there has been some manifest marks of the divine displeasure upon the whore of Rome, and she has been sinking ever since the reformation, at which time, some begin these vials, or before; and she is reduced to a low estate; yet I think not to such a degree as these vials express.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

And the first went] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "the first angel," and who undoubtedly is meant, who readily and cheerfully obeyed the orders given him, as did the rest; by this angel cannot be meant pope Adrian, as Lyra, a popish interpreter, imagines; for a pope would never hurt the worshippers of the beast, as this angel does; rather some christian protestant prince, or magistrate is designed, and Brightman applies it to queen Elizabeth; though a set of kings and princes, yet to come, seem to be intended.

And poured out his vial upon the earth] Not upon the whole earth, and the inhabitants of it; not upon the temple or church of God, and the worshippers in it, which are measured, hid, and protected; nor upon the Roman pagan empire, which was destroyed under the sixth seal, and which never had any worshippers of the beast, and his image, in it, for then he was not risen; nor upon the whole apostate church, only a part of it: some think the meaner and vulgar sort of papists are meant, who were reformed by the Waldenses, Wickliff, Huss, and others before Luther; but rather the antichristian powers on the continent are designed, and particularly Germany; for as the first trumpet affected the earth, chapter viii. 7. and brought the Goths into Germany, and other inland countries on the continent; so this first vial affects the earth, and brings distress upon the popish party in the same place: and this respects not the reformation by Luther, as some have thought, nor the wars of the Turks here in the last age; though were it not for some things unfulfilled, which are to precede these vials, one would be tempted to think, that this vial was now pouring out upon the empire; but I rather

rather I think this refers to a time of distress yet to come, on those parts, and which will issue in a reformation from popery again; for it should be observed, and it may be observed once for all, that though these vials are so many plagues upon antichrist, they are each of them so many steps to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory.

And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image] That is, who were professors of the popish religion, and adherents of the pope of Rome in those parts; see chapter xiii. 15—17. who will only feel the effects of this vial, and that by a noisome and grievous sore falling on them, in allusion to the plague of boils in Egypt, *Exodus ix. 8—11.* by which may be meant, either literally something external, but not the plague in Dioclesian's time, for then the beast was not risen; and there were none that could have his mark or worship his image: some have thought the French disease is intended, which first appeared in the world in 1490, among the papists, as a just judgment upon them, for the horrible and unnatural lusts and uncleanness of the Romish clergy; and others understand it of a very great heat, which will be before the burning of the world, and will raise blisters and boils upon men: or rather this may design something internal, either the remorse of their consciences, reflections on their past practices, and black despair and horror of mind; and their madness, wrath, and fury, their malice and envy at the success of the preachers of the Gospel, and of protestant states and princes against them; see *Deut. xxviii. 27, 28, 34, 35.* Moreover, their secret and wicked practices, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, will be discovered, and they will appear with boils and blotches upon them all over, which will render them odious to the people, and be the means of a general reformation. Mr Daubuz thinks the curse of wickedness in the ninth and tenth centuries, after the invocation of saints and angels, and the worship of images were settled, is meant.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea] Not literally; and so does not design the stagnation of it, which it is thought will be before the general conflagration; see *Amos vii. 4.* nor is it to be understood of the sea of this world,

and the men of it, who are like a troubled sea; but rather of popish doctrines and councils, which are a sea of errors, and will now be confuted, and put an end to. Brightman applies it to the council of Trent, and makes this angel to be Chemnitius, a German divine, who wrote a confutation of it; but as the sea is a collection of many waters, and many waters in this book signify the people and nations under the Romish yoke, sea here may design the whole jurisdiction of Rome, or mystical Babylon; see *Jer. li. 36.* and particularly its maritime powers, Spain and Portugal: and as the second trumpet affected the sea, chapter viii. 8. and brought the Vandals into Spain and Portugal, so this second vial affects the sea, and brings great wars, slaughter, and bloodshed into these parts, when they also will be reformed from popery.

And it became as the blood of a dead man] Thick, clotted together, and putrid, and so never to be returned to their former state.

And every living soul died in the sea] Those that are not reformed will either die by the sword, or fly into other parts; for there will be no comfortable living for the popish party in those countries where now they live in power, ease, and affluence. This, and the following vial, are referred by Mr Daubuz, the one to the first crusades, or holy wars, for the regaining of the holy land, and the other to the latter of them.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

And the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters] Which also is not to be literally understood of a stagnation of them, before the burning of the world; nor of the destruction of popish fleets and navies, such as the Spanish Armado in 1588, and others since; but rather of popish writings, of the most learned and subtle men among them, who like rivers and fountains, which supply and fill the sea, support and keep up the Romish jurisdiction and hierarchy; and of the confutation of them by protestant writers; and of the utter destruction of their principal orders, and chief men among them, as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, jesuits, &c. though it seems chiefly to design the places near to Rome, such as Italy and Savoy; for as the third trumpet affects the rivers and fountains, chap. viii. 10. and brings in the Huns into Italy, and issued in the destruction of the empire; so the third vial affects the same, and brings terrible wars, and great effusion of blood, where

where so much of the blood of the saints have been shed: hence it follows,

And they became blood] These countries will be covered with blood, and a reformation will ensue upon it; the allusion is to *Exod. vii. 19—21.*

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

And I heard the angel of the waters say] So we read in Jewish writings (*t*) of an angel that was, שרן דימא, “the prince of the sea,” and of angels that were over the waters, and others over fire (*u*); though here is designed not one of the, מלאכי מים, “angels of the water,” that presided over the waters, as another over fire; see chapter xiv. 18. and the note there, but the third angel that poured out his vial upon the waters; when he had so done, he said as follows. Dr Lightfoot thinks, and that not without reason, that since these angels appeared in the garb of priests, chapter xv. 6. and since there was a priest appointed to take care of the wells, and fountains, and ditches about Jerusalem, that the people might have water at the feasts (*w*); there is an allusion to him; and certain it is that there was such an officer; there was one Nechoniah who was over the fountains and ditches (*x*); and in the same office was Nicodemus ben Gorion (*y*), thought to be the Nicodemus mentioned in the New Testament.

Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be] Which may be understood either of God the Father, who had power over these plagues, *ו*. 9. and sent them; or of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and is righteous in all his ways and works, in all his judgments on antichrist, and is the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and shall be; see chapter i. 8. The Alexandrian copy, and most others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read *holy* instead of *shalt be*; for the purity and holiness of Christ will be seen in the judgments which he will exercise, as follows,

Because thou hast judged thus] Or “these things;” or “them,” as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, has brought these judgments upon the men signified by rivers and fountains, and

made great havoc and slaughter of them, expressed by their becoming blood; the justice of which appears from the following reason.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets] Which shews that rivers and fountains cannot be literally understood, but men are designed, wicked and bloody men; and it is notorious to all, how much of the blood of the saints, of the preachers of the Gospel, of the prophets and witnesses, have been shed in Italy, Savoy, and other places near Rome, as well as in Rome itself; see chapters xvii. 6. and xviii. 24.

And thou hast given them blood to drink] Sent the sword among them, making great slaughter and devastation; see *Isaiab* xlix. 26.

For they are worthy] Or deserving, to have their blood shed, by the law of retaliation.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true, and righteous are thy judgments.

And I heard another out of the altar say] That is, another angel that came out of the altar; see chapter xiv. 18. and who represents the souls under the altar, whose blood had been shed by the above persons; compare with this chapter vi. 9. though there, such whose blood had been shed by Rome pagan are described; the Ethiopic version calls this angel as before, “the angel of the fountains of water;” and the Alexandrian copy, and Syriac and Arabic versions read, “I heard the altar saying;” as follows,

Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments] The same as chapters xv. 3. and xix. 2. This angel joins the other, and approves and confirms what he says; applauding the judgments of Christ upon the worshippers of the beast, from the verity of them, being what were threatened, and from the justice of them, being what they deserved.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun] Not literally; and so designs not a violent heat, which shall go before, and be a preparation for the burning of the world; nor any sore famine arising from it, which would be common to all, good and

(*t*) T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 68. 3. & Bava Bathra fol. 74. 2. vid. Juchl in Isa. xxix. 10.

(*u*) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 38. 4. par. 2. fol. 167. 4. Targum in Job xxv. 2.

(*w*) Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. §. 15. (*x*) Mifn. Shekalim, c. 5. §. 2.

(*y*) Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2.

and bad ; but mystically : some understand this of Christ, the sun of righteousness, not of any wrath that shall be poured forth on him again, being now justified in the Spirit ; but either of that clear shining of Christ in the ministry of the word, in those times, this vial refers to ; when Zion's light will be come, and the light of the sun will be seven fold, and Christ alone will be exalted ; which clear ministration of Christ, tho' it will not savingly enlighten, yet will convict and confound the antichristian party ; they will be scorched with the beams of heat and light, which will dart from hence ; these will torture them, and fill them with with envy, rage, and malice, because they will not be able to obscure this light, or stop the progress of it ; they themselves will be so enlightened by it, as to see and know the truth of Christ's person, and offices, and grace, and yet will sin against it, and so be guilty of blasphemy against the Spirit of God, a sin which will greatly prevail among them ; and they will, like the clay, be the more hardened by this light and heat, and will not repent of their sins and errors, nor confess them, nor own the light and conviction they have received : or else of the wrath of Christ, which he will move by this angel to stir up against the antichristian party, and which they will be sensible of, and be fearfully looking for. Others, and which comes much to the same sense, understand this of the scriptures, the fountain of spiritual light, and of the clear interpretation of them in those times ; when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and when the day shall declare and make manifest every man's work, and the fire reveal and try it ; and the same effects upon the antichristian party shall follow as before : but I rather think this refers to some part of the antichristian state, as in the other vials, or to something belonging to it ; some have thought that the house of Austria, the chief family in the empire, or the king of Spain, or the emperor, who were both formerly of that house, or Germany itself, is meant ; but the empire, as we have seen, seems to be designed by *the earth* in the first vial ; wherefore, rather as the smiting of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, under the fourth trumpet, signifies the utter extirpation of the Roman emperor, and all other Roman magistrates, who were the sun, moon, and stars in that empire ; so this vial upon the sun refers to the pope, and his creatures, the cardinals, &c. who is the sun in the antichristian kingdom ; and this angel may design the kings of the earth, who will be stirred up against him, by whom he and his dependents will suffer sorely, if not destroyed.

And power was given unto him to scorch men with

fire] Which may either respect the burning of Rome, and the adjacent parts ; or rather the filling of the antichristian party with rage and malice, at the destruction of the pope, and his creatures ; for these men are the same with those in *7. 2.*

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.

And men were scorched with great heat] Burned with rage against the followers of Christ ; were filled with envy at the success of his Gospel, and with fury and madness at the ruinous condition of the antichristian state, being deprived of its head, and chief officers.

And blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues] Plagues or judgments are from God, when and wherever they come ; they are sent and inflicted by him, and he can lessen or increase them, continue or remove them as he pleases ; and these, unless sanctified, will not reform men, but harden them, and set them a blaspheming the author of them. And this blasphemy may either respect the nature and perfections of God, charging him with inequality in his ways, and with injustice and unfaithfulness ; or the Gospel, and the truths of it, which declare his glory, and his greatness ; and which will now have a general spread, to the great mortification and confusion of the followers of antichrist.

And they repented not to give him glory] That is, they did not repent of their wicked deeds, their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts, as in chapter ix. 20, 21. so as to own and confess them, which is the meaning of giving glory to God in repentance ; see *Joshua vii. 19.* This shews that repentance is not in man's power, but in the gift of God's grace ; for though he may give space, yet if he does not give grace to repent, no man will repent ; nor will any means of themselves produce it ; as not the most powerful and awakening ministry, as the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and of the Gospel preachers that will be in those times, this vial refers to, nor the greatest mercies and favours, so not the severest judgments ; see *Amos vi. 6—11.* The event of this vial, or the plague of it, is applied, by Mr Daubuz, to the wars between the emperors and the popes, and between the Guelphs and Gibelines.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial

vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast] The beast is the same with that in chapter xiii. 1, 11. and which again shews that to be one and the same: the seat or throne of the beast is Rome, which, when the empire was pagan, was the seat of Satan, or the dragon, chapter ii. 13. and when the beast or antichrist was risen, the dragon gave this seat, as well as his authority, to him, chapter xiii. 2. and is that city which is so often called, in this book, the great city, and is manifestly pointed out by its seven mountains, on which the city of Rome stood, chapter xvii. 9. and the pouring out of this vial upon it denotes the destruction of it, when it will be burnt down, and become desolate, an habitation of devils, of every foul spirit, and hateful bird, chapter xviii. 2, 9. and this corresponds with the fifth trumpet; for as that brings in the rise of antichrist, both eastern and western, who rose much about the same time, so this vial affects him particularly, the western antichrist, his seat and kingdom. Mr Daubuz refers this plague to the expulsion of the western and eastern emperors from their capital cities, Rome and Constantinople, and to the mischiefs caused by the antipopes in the west, and to the quarrels and schism in the Greek churches in the fourteenth century.

And his kingdom was full of darkness] Not only of the darkness of false doctrine and superstition, for so it was always, being filled with the smoke of the bottomless pit; nor only of judicial blindness and darkness, which the subjects of the antichristian state are given up unto; but rather of a discovery of all this, with all their hidden works of darkness, which will now be brought to light; though it seems chiefly to design the great affliction and distress the antichristian state will be in at this time, which darkness sometimes signifies; see *Isaiah ix. 1, 2. Jer. xiii. 16. Amos v. 18.* it having lost its sun, the pope, under the preceding vial, and its seat, the city of Rome under this: the sense is, that it will be greatly obscured in its glory and magnificence, in its traffic and riches, chapter xviii. 11-19. its power and authority will be greatly diminished, and it will be had in contempt by the princes of the earth; though it will not as yet be utterly destroyed, for its utter destruction is reserved for the seventh and last vial. The allusion is to the plague of darkness in Egypt, *Exod. x. 21-23.*

And they gnawed their tongues for pain] These are the men of the antichristian party, the subjects of the antichristian kingdom, now become full of darkness, the worshippers of the beast, and his image; these will gnaw their tongues, which expresses their inward anguish and distress, their anger, wrath, and fury, their being filled with revenge, and yet in an incapacity to execute it, and will even be afraid to express it; and therefore will bite their tongues in madness; and this for pain, for the pain of their mind, at the sad and low estate of the antichristian kingdom.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

And blasphemed the God of heaven] Who made it, and dwells in it, and from whence wrath is revealed, and comes upon the seat of the beast, upon the kingdom of antichrist, and the subjects of that kingdom; they will curse him who is of right their king, and their God, and look upwards to heaven, where he is, *Isaiah viii. 21, 22.* and this,

Because of their pains and their sores] See *2. 2.* the inward frettings and distresses of their minds, the gallings and gnawings of their consciences, the horror and terror of their souls, and their fearful looking for of judgment, which the present face of things upon antichrist will bring upon them; just as the Egyptians, in the time of their darkness, were distressed with internal guilt, and black horror of mind, and with evil spirits, which were sent among them, and haunted them during that season; see *Psalms lxxviii. 49.*

And repented not of their deeds] Their antichristian works of darkness; see chapter ix. 20, 21.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates] Which is not to be understood literally of the river Euphrates, which ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and by the walls of Babylon; and of the drying of it up to make way for the Jews in the eastern parts of the world, to pass into their own land, and possess it; when a like miracle will be wrought for them as was when they came out of Egypt, by dividing the Red sea for them; and as when they entered into Canaan's land, by laying the waters of Jordan on heaps,

heaps, so that they passed over as on dry land; in favour of which sense the passage in *Isaiah* xi. 15, 16. is thought to be, which the Targum interprets of God's smiting the river Euphrates; though the river Nile in Egypt seems rather to be meant: but it does not appear that there is any number of Jews beyond the river Euphrates; the far greater number of them is in the western and northern parts of the world; so that there will be no need for the drying up of this river for their passage into their own land; nor if there were any in those parts, can any reason be given why they should be called the kings of the east, who, wherever they are, are a poor contemptible people, and have never had any ensigns of royalty among them for many hundreds of years; nor can that river be thought much to hinder, were all other impediments out of the way, nor the drying of it up much facilitate their passage to Judea, and much less affect their conversion: besides, this vial, as the rest, is a plague on antichrist in some branch or other, or on some part or other of the antichristian state; which if not designed here, is no where in the account of this vial, and therefore this must be understood mystically; there is no doubt an allusion to the draining of this river at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, according as was predicted in prophecy, *Isaiah* xliv. 27, 28. *Jer.* i. 38. and chapter li. 31, 32, 36, 37. who making sluices and drains, turned the river another way, and marched through it with his army, and surprized and took the city at once, whilst Belshazzar and his nobles were indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness, as *Daniel* relates, chapter v. 1—30. Now some, because that Babylon was situated upon the river Euphrates, and Rome, or the Romish antichrist is mystical Babylon, think that is here designed, and is the object of this vial; and that the drying up of this river designs the withdrawing of nations and kingdoms, signified by waters, chap. xviii. 15. from its jurisdiction and power, which will bring on its ruin; and also the stoppage of dues and tithes, annates, Peter's pence, and of all its traffic in indulgences, pardons, &c. whereby it will be greatly impoverished, and brought to nothing: but it should be observed, that the fifth vial affects Rome, the seat of the beast; and as for the beast himself, he will not be destroyed till the battle of Armageddon; and mystical Babylon, or the antichristian state, in the whole compass of it, will not be destroyed until the pouring out of the seventh vial; wherefore rather the eastern antichrist, the Turks, are meant, in whose dominions this river is; for as the Assyrian monarch is signified by the waters of this river, when he was in his glory, and had his seat at Babylon,

by which this river ran, *Isaiah* viii. 7, 8. so may the Turks, who inhabit by this river, be intended by it; and the rather, as this sense exactly corresponds with the sixth trumpet; for as the sounding of that trumpet looses the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, which founded the Turkish empire, as we have seen; so the pouring out of this sixth vial affects the same empire, and brings it to ruin. Mr Daubuz is of opinion, that this plague refers to the depopulation and destruction of the Grecian empire, and the bringing of the Turks into Europe, who have greatly distressed and tormented the corrupted christians or papists.

And the water thereof was dried up] The Ottoman empire will be extinct, just as the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy is expressed by the drying up of its sea, *Jer.* li. 36. so the destruction of the Turkish empire is signified by the drying up of the water of this river, which is in the heart of it: and this is the passing away of the second woe, chapter xi. 14.

That the way of the kings of the east might be prepared] Which some understand of christians in general, who are made kings and priests unto God, and of christian kings in particular, whose way will be prepared by the declining state of antichrist, to express their hatred to the whore of Rome, and burn her flesh with fire; but the Romish antichrist is not here intended: others think, as before observed, that the Jews are designed; that the Jews will be converted in the last days, seems manifest from *Hosea* iii. 5. *Romans* xi. 25, 26. and other places; and that they will return to their own land is suggested in abundance of prophecies, particularly in *Ezekiel* xxxvii. 21. and *Amos* ix. 14, 15. and it must be allowed that the eastern, as well as the western antichrist, is a stumbling to them; and especially the advantage which the Turks have gained over the powers that go under the christian name, and their possession of their land is an hindrance to their return to it; so that the destruction of the Turkish empire will undoubtedly make way for their conversion, and restoration to their own land; but then this will be equally advantageous to the Jews in the west as to those in the east, if there be any numbers of them there, which does not appear, and therefore there seems no reason why they should be pointed at, and be called the kings of the east: rather therefore to me it seems, that through the fall of the Ottoman empire, way will be made for the kings and princes of the east, literally understood, to have and embrace the Gospel of Christ; for the Turks being destroyed, the Mahometan religion will decline, the Gospel will

will be carried into the eastern parts of the world, into those vast kingdoms and countries which lie in those parts, when they will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and the kings and princes of them will come to the brightness of Zion's rising; so that the ruin of this monarchy will pave the way for the spread of Christ's kingdom from sea to sea, and from the river, the river Euphrates, to the ends of the earth; and this also will prepare the way, and lead on for all the saints, who are kings, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, who is said to come from the east, chapter vii. 2. or from the rising of the sun, as these are said to do, as the words may be rendered, to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven: Philo the Jew (z) has some expressions illustrating the literal sense of this, where he speaks of a Roman army on the banks of Euphrates, which kept the passage of the eastern kings.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs] Rome, the seat of antichrist, being destroyed, and the kingdom of the beast darkened, and brought into great contempt, Mahometanism greatly declining, the Gospel succeeding every where, the Jews being converted, and re-settled in their own land, the devil bestirs himself more than ordinary; and dispatches his, and the emissaries of antichrist, to the kings of the whole earth, that can any ways be engaged on their side, and against the saints; and these are no other than the creatures of antichrist, such as cardinals, priests, and particularly jesuits, as their original from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet show. Mr Daubuz thinks these three are the monks, the religious knights, and secular clergy: and these are called spirits; not because they are what are called familiar spirits, or devils themselves, for they are the spirits of devils, as in the next verse; but either because they pretend to be spiritual men, ecclesiastics, men in spiritual offices, and indeed are spiritual wickednesses in high places; or because of their agility, swiftness, and expedition in going to and fro, Satan like, to do mischief: and they are said to be unclean; as the evil spirits and devils are, being so by nature, and delighting in uncleanness, and giving themselves up to work it with greediness: and they are like frogs; the allusion is to the plague of frogs in Egypt, *Exod. viii. 5, 6.* and these antichristian emissaries are fitly compared to them, for their

impurity, and pleasure they take in it, as frogs do in dirt and filth; and for their being talkative, impudent, and troublesome, like the noisy, croaking frogs; so rhetoricians are by Cicero (a) compared to frogs; and as the frogs of Egypt got into the king's bed-chamber, *Exod. viii. 3. Psalm cv. 30.* so these get into the private retirements of princes, into their cabinet-councils, and stir them up to war and blood-shed: and as for the number, three, this is only used to express a sufficient number of them, or to make the account square with the dragon, beast, and false prophet, from whom they proceed; and besides, this is omitted in the king's manuscript. Now John saw these, in a visionary way,

Come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet] By the dragon is meant the devil, chap. xii. 9. not as acting in Rome pagan, which has been long ago destroyed, rather as in the pagan parts of the world, and as in the Turkish empire, now ruined; who seeing his cause declining every where, bestirs himself to support and revive it, though this issues in the binding of him for a thousand years, chap. xx. 2. By the beast is meant the first beast, in chap. xiii. 1. and so the Ethiopic version renders it; the antichristian civil state, now sadly shattered and weakened, by the pouring out of the fifth vial: and by the false prophet is meant, not Mahomet, or the supporters of his religion, but the second beast in chapter xiii. 11, 12, 14, 15. or the antichristian ecclesiastic state, as appears from the description of this prophet in chap. xix. 20. compared with that: so then these spirits manifestly appear to be the emissaries of antichrist, under a diabolical influence; his creatures, that are made, and sent forth by him, have their commissions and orders from him, to act for him in every shape, to support his interest, civil and religious, by lies, murders, and false doctrine; a further account is given of them in the next verse.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

For they are the spirits of devils] They are of their father the devil; they are acted and influenced by him; he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; they do his lusts, and are murderers and liars, and false teachers, like him.

4 H 2

Working

(z) De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1023.

(a) Ad Atticum, l. 15. Ep. 16.

Working miracles] Living ones, to deceive men; this clearly points out who are meant, namely the followers of antichrist, who as they spread the doctrines of devils, endeavour to confirm them by signs and lying wonders.

Which go forth unto the kings of the earth] Those who have committed fornication with the Romish antichrist, such of them as will remain.

And of the whole world] As many pagan princes as they can come at, and engage by any ways and means in their interest; they will go forth to them like the lying spirit to Ahab's prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 22.

To gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty] That is, they will persuade them to gather together, to fight against the saints, the Gentile christians in the several parts of the world, and the Jewish christians, now settled in their own land; and this will be the battle of the Lord, who is God Almighty, and it will be fighting against him; and therefore the attempt must be vain and fruitless, and issue in the ruin of those who are gathered to it, who will be deceived and drawn into it by these diabolical spirits: and this is called *the battle of that great day of God*; not of the day of judgment, for it will be before that time; but of that day of vengeance upon all the remains of his and his church's enemies, both pagan, papal, and Mahometan, who will for this purpose be gathered together; "which," as the Ethiopic version renders it, "God has appointed."

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Behold, I come as a thief] These are the words of Christ, inserted in a parenthesis in this account, before it is concluded, to acquaint his people with his near and sudden approach, and to give them a word of caution and exhortation in these times of difficulty; for he is the Lord God Almighty, who sent forth these angels to pour out their vials, and whose judgments are applauded as righteous, 7. 1, 5, 7, 14. and who so often in chap. xxii. 7, 12, 20. says *I come quickly*; and which is to be understood not of his spiritual coming, which will be already at this time, but of his personal coming: and which will be *as a thief*; as it is often expressed, 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. not in the bad sense, to steal and kill, and to destroy, though Christ's coming will issue in the everlasting destruction of the wicked; but the

phrase is designed to express the suddenness of his coming, and the surprize of it.

Blessed is he that watcheth] Against sin, the lusts of the flesh, and the cares of this life, lest they bring a sleepiness upon him, and so the day of the Lord come upon him at an unawares; and against Satan and his temptations, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; and against his emissaries and false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive; and blessed is he also who is wishing and waiting for the coming of Christ, and so being ready, will enter with him into the marriage-chamber, and partake of the supper of the Lamb.

And keepeth his garments] Either his conversation-garments, unspotted from the world, and whenever defiled washes them, and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; and keeps them from being stripped of them, by those who lead them into sinful ways; or that keeps and holds fast the robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of his salvation, which are the righteousness of the saints, that fine linen clean and white, that white raiment which only can cover their nakedness, that the shame thereof does not appear, chapters xix. 8. and iii. 18.

Lest he walk naked] ערום כן ילכתו (b), "naked of the commandments," or good works, according to the Jewish phrase; having lost, or dropped his conversation-garments.

And they see his shame] Or lest being naked, he be exposed to shame and confusion, yea, to everlasting ruin and destruction; see Matt. xxii. 12, 13. the allusion is to the burning of the garments of those priests who were found asleep when upon their watch in the temple: the account that is given is this (c); "the man of the mountain of the house (the governor of the temple) goes round all the wards (every night) with burning torches before him; and in every ward where the person does not stand upon his feet, the man of the mountain of the house says to him, Peace be to thee; if he finds he is asleep, he strikes him with his staff, and he has power to burn his clothes; and they say (in Jerusalem) what voice is that in the court? (it is answered) the voice of a Levite beaten, and his cloaths burnt, because he slept in the time of his watch; R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, once they found my mother's brother asleep, and they burnt his clothes;" now imagine with what shame the poor Levite so served must appear the next morning among his brethren, with his

(b) Yalkot Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 91. 3. (c) Mishna Middot. c. 1. §. 2. T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1. Maimon. Beth Habbechris, c. 8. §. 10. & Cels. Hamikdash, c. 7. §. 4.

clothes burnt, and he naked; and with greater shame and confusion must he appear at the last day, that is destitute of the righteousness of Christ.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

And he gathered them together] Or rather "they gathered them together," as the Syriac version renders it; for though the verb is singular, a noun plural goes before it, as in *ψ*. 14. and the same spirits that are there said to go forth, to gather the kings together, these will gather them together; will persuade the papal, pagan, and Mahometan powers, the remains of them in the several parts of the world, to join together, and make one effort for the reviving of their declining, and almost ruined interests: for which purpose they will be brought together,

Into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon] Which may be the same with *Har-megiddo*, the mountain of *Megiddo*; for the Hebrew word מגידו, is read *Ar* by the Greeks; so the city *Argarize* is interpreted the mountain of the most high (*d*): and this refers either to the slaying of *Johiah* in the valley of *Megiddo*, which occasioned such mourning, that it became proverbial for any great sorrow; see *2 Chron.* xxxv. 22, 25. *Zech.* xii. 11. where it is called the valley of *Megiddon*; or rather to the slaughter of *Sisera's* army at the waters of *Megiddo*, by *Barak*, *Judges* v. 19. suggesting that the same would be the fate of these united powers. Some derive the word from מרמא and מרמא, which signify "the destruction of their troops, or armies;" and so designs not any place, that has been or is, but which will be so called from the issue of this battle; and since it is an Hebrew name that will be given it, it may lead us to conclude it will be some where in Judea, and very likely no other than the valley of *Jehoshaphat*, where all nations will be gathered; and which is called the valley of decision, where will be the day of the Lord, and multitudes will be slain, *Joel* iii. 2, 13, 14. though the name will suit any place where there will be a defeat of these enemies; but this vial only brings them together; the utter destruction of them is reserved for the next.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air] Or "upon the air," as the Alexandrian copy, Syriac and Arabic versions read; by which is meant the kingdom of Satan, he being the prince of the power of the air, *Eph.* ii. 2. not that he has power over the air, to raise or lay winds and storms in it at pleasure; but he is so called because he is the prince of that posse of devils, the principalities and powers of darkness, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompassing the whole earth, stands for the kingdom of Satan all the world over: and this vial differs from all the rest; that whereas the rest only affect some part or branch of the antichristian state, this will affect all the remains of the pagan, papal, and Mahometan powers, gathered and united together at Armageddon; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, who will be slain, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beast and false prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and cast alive into the lake of fire, which is expressive both of their temporal and eternal punishment, chapter xix. 17—21. but to the binding of Satan upon the second coming of Christ, of which notice is before given, *ψ*. 15. and even to the destruction of *Gog and Magog* at the end of the thousand years reign; yea, to the casting of the devil into everlasting fire, since this vial is the last plague, in which the wrath of God is filled up, and so brings to the end of all things, chap. xx. 1—10. The first accomplishment of this vial will be the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the remains of all Christ's and his church's enemies will have a total defeat; and this will be the third and last woe, which will utterly destroy those that have destroyed the earth, pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, even all the open enemies of Christ, so that nothing will lie in the way of his kingdom; now will the spiritual reign of Christ, which has been gradually advancing by the pouring out of each vial, be in its full glory: but though antichrist will be no more, and Satan will have no more in form an open kingdom upon earth; yet towards the close of this reign, great lukewarmness and coldness will seize professors of religion, and immorality and profaneness will abound again; which will bring on the times of the coming of the Son of man; who upon his personal descent from the third heaven into the air, will drive Satan and his posse of devils from their territories

(d) Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

territories, and quickly will the general conflagration begin, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and which is no inconsiderable part of the pouring out of this vial into the air.

And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne] This voice is said to come out of the temple of heaven, that is, out of the temple which is in heaven, which will now be opened, as under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vial corresponds, and indeed is cotemporary; and which designs the church, enjoying the pure worship of God, the word and ordinances, and the free exercise of religion: and this shows that when this voice will be uttered, as yet the Jerusalem church-state will not be begun, since there will be no temple in that; see chapters xi. 19. and xiv. 17. and xv. 5. and xxi. 22. the words of *heaven*, are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, which read, "out of the temple from the throne;" the seat of government in the church, described in chap. iv. 2—6. the voice came with power, authority, and majesty; not from any of the four and twenty elders, or four living creatures, or angels about the throne; but either from God the Father that sits upon it; or from Christ the Lamb in the midst of it, and rather from the latter, since a like phrase was used by him on the cross, *John* xix. 30. and the same is expressed by him who is the Alpha and Omega, *Rev.* xxi. 6. and this voice is called a great one, being the voice of a great person, the King of kings, and coming with great power, and was spoken aloud.

Saying, It is done] What the angel swore should be in the days of the seventh angel, namely, that time, antichristian time, should be no more, and the mystery of God in his purposes and providences should be finished, and all the glorious things spoken of his church and people be accomplished; see the notes on chap. x. 6, 7. the word *γῶν* may be rendered *it has been*, or *it was*, and the sense is, but now is not; and the meaning may be, Babylon was, but is not, it is now fallen; the beast and false prophets were, but now are not; the Turk, or Mahomet, was, but is no more; all the antichristian powers are destroyed; Christ's body, the church, will be compleated, the Jews will be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles brought in, all the elect called, and the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride for her husband; and when the utmost effects of this vial will take place, the end of all things will be; by the same *fiat* that made the heavens and the earth, they will disappear, and new heavens and earth succeed in their room.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings] As at the giving of the law, *Exod.* xix. 16. and at the founding of the seventh trumpet; see the note on chap. xi. 20. and may intend either the pure ministry of the Gospel in the spiritual reign, the voices of Christ's ministers, and the effects of them, who will be Boanergesses, sons of thunder, and will be the means of enlightning the minds of many, as well as of shaking the consciences of men, signified by the earthquake following; or rather the tremendous and awful judgments of God upon the remains of the antichristian party, as the very great commotions and changes that will be made in the world are expressed in the next clause.

And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great] For as the changes made in the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, are signified by the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and as the fall of paganism is expressed by an earthquake, and the fall of the tenth part of the city is the effect of another; so the destruction of all the antichristian powers, and the mutations made in the earth thereby, are designed by this; see *Heb.* xii. 26, 27. *Rev.* vi. 12. and chap. xi. 13. *Joel.* iii. 16. Mr Daubuz applies the whole of this vial to the reformation, when such a revolution was made in a short time, as has not been known since the world was, or men became worshippers of the beast; at which time christendom was divided into three parts, the eastern or Greek church, the western or Latin church, and the reformed churches.

19 And the great city is divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

And the great city was divided into three parts] By which is meant not Christendom, distinguished into protestants, papists, and neutrals, which has been long the case; nor the city of Jerusalem, as inhabited by Christians, Jews, and Turks; nor the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, which will have suffered under the fifth vial; but the whole Romish jurisdiction, which is the great city,

city, that reigns over the kings of the earth, as it will now be; though some think the Turkish empire is meant, which they suppose was only afflicted under the preceding vial, but will now be divided into three parts, and afterwards into six, *Ezek. xxxix. 1, 2.* and so come to ruin; and others are of opinion that it is included in this great city at least; and doubtless the remains of it are to be taken into this account, and probably are considered in the following clause; wherefore it is better to understand this of the Romish jurisdiction, so often called the great city in this book, chapters xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and its division into three parts is either in reference to the three heads of it, the dragon, beast, and false prophet, or to the three unclean spirits that come out of them, which will lead on to this ruin; though the allusion seems rather to be to the destruction of Jerusalem, *Ezek. v. 2, 12.* and denotes the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist, in all its branches and remains; a tenth part of this city will fall towards the close of the sixth trumpet, chap. xi. 13. and now all the other nine parts will fall, a threefold division will be made of the city, each division containing three parts: the Jews (s) have a prophesy, that upon an appearance of a star at Rome, which they suppose will be when the Messiah comes, the three upper walls of that city will fall, and the great temple, or church (St Peter's) will fall, and the governor of that city (the pope) will die.

And the cities of the nations fell] Of the pagans and Mahometans; or as there will be an utter extirpation of the papacy, so of paganism and Mahometanism, in the several nations where they have obtained, and where there will be now any remains of them.

And great Babylon came in remembrance before God] Not Constantinople, as Brightman thinks, because that Rome, the seat of the beast, is affected under the fifth vial, and the great city under this; but since no other is called Babylon in this book but the Romish antichristian state, it must be meant here; see chapters xiv. 8. and xvii. 5. and xviii. 2, 10, 21. for many hundreds of years Babylon seemed to be forgotten by God, no notice being taken of her sins and iniquities in a judicial way; but now God will remember her sins, chap. xviii. 5. and inflict deserved punishment upon her.

To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath] As a just retaliation for the wine of her fornication, with which she has intoxicated the kings and inhabitants of the earth; the wrath of God is sometimes signified in the Old Testament by a cup, a wine-cup, a wine-cup of fury,

see *Psal. lxxv. 8. Jer. xxv. 15.* and here the exceeding greatness of his wrath is expressed by the phrases used, and intends the pouring out of all his vengeance, to the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

And every island fled away] This may be understood either of the dissolution of the world, the present heavens and earth, when there will be no more sea, chap. xxi. 1. and so consequently no islands.

And the mountains were not found] For the earth and the heaven will be fled away at the appearance of Christ the judge, and there will be no place found for them, chapter xx. 11. and new heavens, and a new earth, without sea or mountains, will succeed: or rather this may signify the utter extirpation of all the antichristian powers in every shape, whether on islands or on the continent; for this day of the Lord will be upon every high mountain and hill, to bring them low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted, *Isaiah ii. 14, 15, 17.* and may particularly respect the dissolution of monasteries, and the plundering them of their riches and revenues.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven] Which must be understood not as after the fall of the cities, and the flight of the islands and mountains, but at the same time; and it looks as if such men that shall escape at the battle of Armageddon, that hail-stones from heaven will fall upon them and destroy them; just as the kings of the Amorites and their men were killed by hail-stones, cast down by the Lord from heaven, as they fled before Joshua, when more were killed by the stones than were slain by the sword, *Joshua x. 11.* the allusion seems to be to the plague of hail in *Exod. ix. 23—26.*

Every stone about the weight of a talent] Which is threescore pound weight, a prodigious weight; indeed for a single hail-stone! such hail-stones were never known to fall; the largest I have read of is what Caspar Wesserus assured Mr Broughton (f) of, at Zurich, which being brought from a field afar off, to the consul, and so must melt in carriage, yet weighed a pound. It may be said:

of

(s) Zohar in Num. fol. 86. 1.

(f) See his Works, p. 496.

of this hail-storm, as of the earthquake in a preceding verse, that it will be such as never was since men were upon earth; and denotes the sore, heavy, and even intolerable judgments of God upon the antichristian party: God's judgments are sometimes signified by hail-storms, *Isaiah* xxx. 26—30. and particularly the judgments upon Gog and Magog, *Ezek.* xxxviii. 22. which may respect the same as here: the Jews (*g*) now expect a great hail in the times of Gog and Magog.

And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail] The plague of hail brought down the hard heart of Pharaoh, and humbled him, so that he acknowledged his wickedness, and the sin of his people, and owned the justice of God; but this more terrible storm will have no effect upon these men, to convince and reform them, but on the contrary, they will break out into blasphemy against God, who caused it to fall on them; it will have the same effect as the fourth and fifth vials.

For the plague thereof was exceeding great] It must beat down all before it, and be intolerable: whether this hail-storm may not also have some regard to coldness and lukewarmness, as Napier suggests, and so may point at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ, or the Laodicean state, which will bring on the second coming of Christ, and so this effect of the seventh vial will end where the seven churches and seven trumpets do, may be considered; see the note on chap. xi. 20.

C H A P. XVII.

This chapter contains a vision of a beast, and a woman on it, and the interpretation of it; one of the seven angels that had the seven vials proposes to John to show him the whore of Babylon, the Jezebel before spoken of, who sits on many waters, with whom the kings and inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, being intoxicated by her, *vs.* 1, 2. in order to which he carries him into the wilderness, and there he sees a woman, who is described by the beast she sat on, of a scarlet colour, full of blasphemous names, with seven heads and ten horns; by her array, in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, pearls, and precious stones; by a cup she had in her hand, full of abominable filth; by a name written on her forehead, given at large, and by the condition she was in, drunk with the blood of the saints; which sight filled John with great wonder and admiration, *vs.* 3—6. wherefore, to remove his astonishment, the angel proposes to explain to

him the mystery of the woman, and the beast she sat on, *v.* 7. and first the mystery of the beast is explained, by its several states, past, present, and to come; by its original and end, ascending out of the bottomless pit, and going into perdition; by the veneration it would be had in by the reprobate part of the world, *v.* 8. its seven heads are interpreted of the seven mountains on which the city of Rome, designed by the woman, stood, and of seven kings, or forms of government, five of which had ceased, and one was in being in John's time, another was to come, which should not continue long, and the beast would be an eighth, *v.* 9—11. its ten horns are explained of ten kings, described by their kingdom they had not as yet received, and which they should have one hour with the beast; by their agreement in mind and conduct; and by their war with the Lamb, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and those that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful, and the issue of it, *v.* 12—14. the waters on which the whore sat are interpreted of a multitude of people, nations and tongues, *v.* 15. the hatred and destruction of her by the ten kings, and the manner of it are declared, *v.* 16. which is owing to the will of God, who put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast till the prophecies and promises were fulfilled respecting this matter, and now to destroy the whore that sat upon it, *v.* 17. which woman is explained of the great city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, *v.* 18.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither: I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials] It may be the first of them, since one of the four beasts designs the first of them in chap. vi. 1, 3. though Brightman thinks the fifth angel is meant, because he poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, who is by this angel described; but rather this is the seventh and last angel, concerned in the utter destruction of antichrist; and therefore proposes to John to show him the judgment of the great whore.

And talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither] He conversed with him in a friendly manner, see *Zechar.* i. 9. and desires him to come nearer to him, and go along with him, adding,

I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore] That noted and famous one, known before to John by the names of Jezebel and Babylon, who taught, and caused many to commit fornication, chapters ii. 20. and xiv. 8. and is no other than Rome papal; for that a city or state is meant, is clear from *ſ. 18.* and it is usual for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called whores or harlots, see *Isaiah i. 21. Ezek. xxiii. 2—4. Nahum iii. 4.* and she is called a great one, because of the largeness of the papal see; and because of the multitude of persons, the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of it, with whom the Romish antichrist has committed spiritual fornication, or idolatry: her judgment signifies either her sin and wickedness; in which sense the word is used in *Rom. v. 16.* and which is exposed, *ſ. 5, 6.* namely, her idolatry and cruelty; or else her condemnation, and the execution of it, suggested in *ſ. 8, 16.* and more largely described in the following chapter.

That sitteth upon many waters] Which in *ſ. 15.* are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, subject to the jurisdiction of Rome; and so several antichristian states are in the preceding chapter signified by the sea, and by rivers and fountains of water; and this is said in reference to Babylon, an emblem of the Romish harlot, which was situated upon the river Euphrates, and is therefore said to dwell upon many waters, *Jer. li. 13.* her sitting here may be in allusion to the posture of harlots plying of men; or may denote her ease, rest, and grandeur, sitting as a queen; and is chiefly expressive of her power and dominion over the kings and nations of the earth, *ſ. 18.*

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication] These are the ten kings, who being of the same mind, and of one religion, the popish religion, gave their power, strength, and kingdom to the beast, *ſ. 12, 17.* and have been enticed by the whore of Rome to commit spiritual fornication with her; that is idolatry, to worship, as that church enjoins, idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints; hence this whore appears to be no mean strumpet, but one of great note, and in much vogue, being sought after, and made use of by the great men of the earth.

And the inhabitants of the earth have been made
Vol. V.

drunk with the wine of her fornication] That is, the inhabitants of the Roman empire, or earthly-minded men, mere carnal persons, have been drawn into idolatrous practices by the allurements of the church of Rome; such as riches, honours, pleasures, lying miracles, and great pretensions to devotion and religion; whereby they have been intoxicated as men with wine, and have been filled with a blind zeal for that church, and the false doctrines and worship of it, and with madness and fury against the true professors of religion.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

So he carried me away in the spirit] Not in body, as if he was removed from the isle of Patmos to some other place; but in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel was carried between earth and heaven in the visions of God, to Jerusalem, *Ezek. viii. 3.* It was represented to the mind of John, to his spirit, or soul, as if he had been taken up by the angel and carried through the air,

Into the wilderness] By which may be meant either the wilderness of the people, the world, the church hereafter described, being a worldly one, and consisting of worldly men; or Gentilism, the Gentile world is often in the prophecies of the Old Testament called a wilderness; the Romish church having much of heathen worship, and heathen customs and practices in it, hence its votaries are called Gentiles, chapter xi. 2. or this circumstance may be mentioned, and the thing so represented to John, because that a wilderness is a solitary place, and fit for retirement and meditation; and where he might, without any interruption, take a full view of the following sight, and make proper observations upon it; and it is worthy of notice, that this is the place where the true church fled, and became out of sight, in the room of which this apostate church appears: or, as others have thought, John is had into the wilderness, where the true church was hid and nourished, and the false one is there shown him, that seeing both together, he might compare them, and observe the difference between them; to all which may be added, that a wilderness is a fit place for such a beast as hereafter described, to be seen in.

And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast] The beast is the same with that in chapter xiii. 1. as the description shows, and is no other than the

Roman empire as papal; the *scarlet* colour is expressive of its imperial dignity, its power and authority, it received from the dragon; and also of this beast's cruelty and tyranny, and of its shedding the blood of the saints: the *woman* sitting upon it, is the great city of Rome, as is manifest from *ch. 18.* or the Romish antichrist, the apostate church of Rome, represented by a woman, as the true church is, chapter *xii. 1.* but in a very different form, and is the same with the second beast in chapter *xiii. 11.* and the false prophet; and as the two beasts respect the same, under different considerations, namely the papacy in its civil and ecclesiastical capacity, so this strange phenomenon, a woman sitting on such a beast, means one and the same thing, as the horse and his rider in the seals, though in different views; the woman designs the Romish church, with the pope at the head of it, and the beast the Roman papal empire as civil, by which the former is supported and upheld, bore up on high, and exalted in the manner it has been: moreover, as purple and scarlet are the colours of garments wore by the pope and cardinals, hence the woman in the next verse is said to be *arrayed in purple and scarlet colour*; so even the very beasts on which they rode were covered with scarlet. Platina (*b*) says that pope Paul the second "ordered by a public decree, on pain of punishment, that no man should wear a scarlet cap but cardinals; to whom also, in the first year of his popedom, he gave cloth of the same colour, to put upon their horses and mules when they rode; and besides, would have put into the decree, that the cardinals hats should be of scarlet silk:" upon which Du Moulin (*i*) makes this remark; "pope Paul the second was the first that gave scarlet to the cardinals, as well for themselves as for their mules, to the end that this prophecy, which agreeth in general with the see of Rome, might likewise appertain particularly to every one of the pillars of the said see, which is to be set upon a *scarlet-coloured beast*." It follows,

Full of names of blasphemy] That is, the beast, or Roman papal empire, was full of them, in chapter *xiii. 1, 5.* a name of blasphemy is said to be upon his head, and he to have a mouth speaking blasphemy; but here his whole body is represented as full of them, and may refer to the blasphemous doctrines of worshipping of images, of pardons and indulgencies, of transubstantiation, &c. and to the multitude of images, of the virgin Mary, and other saints in the antichristian state, in every part of it; and to those

blaspheming persons the cardinals, priests, and jesuits, which abound in it; as well as to those blasphemous names and titles which are given to the pope, the head of it, or assumed by him; such as God on earth, the vicar of Christ, the head, and husband, and foundation of the church, with many others.

Having seven heads, and ten horns] The seven heads are the seven mountains, on which the city of Rome, the metropolis of the empire, is seated; and the seven kings, or seven forms of government, under which it has been, as appears from *ch. 9. 10.* see the notes on chapters *xii. 3.* and *xiii. 1.* and the *ten horns* signify the ten kings over the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided, when over-run by the Goths and Vandals; and which ten kings gave their kingdoms to the beast, the Romish antichrist; they gave their strength and power to him, being of his religion, and have been his horns, his defenders and supporters ever since, as may be gathered from *ch. 12, 13, 17.*

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour] Which may be expressive of her grandeur, authority, and power, sitting as a queen, and sovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it; and also of her bloody disposition to the saints, with whose blood she is afterwards said to be drunk.

And decked with gold and precious stones and pearls] Which may denote her hypocrisy, she being gilded with these things, as the word signifies, when she was inwardly rotten, corrupt, and filthy; and may point out the things, by which persons have been enticed into the communion of the church of Rome, and to comply with her idolatrous worship and practices; and may also respect the prodigious riches, which have, by various methods, been brought into the pope's coffers; these, with other things, are reckoned among the merchandise of Babylon; chap. *xviii. 12.* and particularly this may have reference to the adorning of their temples, or churches, and the decking of their images, with those things; which gaudy pompous shews strike the minds of carnal men, amuse them, and engage their attention. So Philo (*k*) the Jew describes an whore

(b) De Vitis Pontificum, p. 312.

Catholic Faith, &c. c. 3. p. 38.

(i) Defence of the

(k) De Mercede Meretricia non recip. p. 382.

as arrayed in purple, and adorned with gold and precious stones; see *Prov.* vii. 10.

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filibinefs of her fornication] In allusion to Babylon, *Jer.* li. 7. and also to harlots, who give philters or love-potions to men, to excite lust, and draw their affections to them; and this being a golden cup, may design the external lustre and splendor of the worship of the church of Rome, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is attended with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and perhaps some regard may be had to the golden chalice, in which, it is pretended, is the very blood of Christ, which the priests take as such, and worship and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and such are the persons that partake of it; like the Pharisees of old, they make clean the outside of the cup and platter; glisten, and make a great shew of devotion, but within are full of extortion and excess.

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

And upon her forehead was a name written] As the high-priest had on his mitre upon his forehead written holiness to the Lord, *Exodus* xxviii. 36. only a different inscription from that; the allusion is thought to be to harlots, who not only used to put their names over their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads, that all might know who they were; of which Mr Daubuz has given proofs out of Seneca, Martial, Juvenal, and Petronius; and such might be said to have an whore's forehead indeed: and this is expressive of the openness and impudence of the church of Rome, in her idolatrous worship; she openly declares it, and pleads for it, and invites and ensnares persons to join with her in it: the name follows.

Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth] Her name is mystery; not the mystery of godliness, that she dislikes and opposes, but the mystery of iniquity; which is the name antichrist went by in the apostle Paul's time, when he was but in embryo, *2 Thess.* ii. 7. Some reference may be had to the mystery of the mass, in which the papists pretend are the very body and blood of Christ; to their seven sacraments, for wherever almost they find the word mystery, they make a sacrament of that to which it is applied; and to their unwritten

traditions, and the sense of the scriptures, which are locked up in the pope's breast: and it is very remarkable what has been observed by some that the word *mystery* was formerly upon the frontlet of the pope's mitre, and was removed by pope Julius the third, when it was observed that the protestants made use of this passage of scripture, and applied it to the Romish antichrist. Joseph Scaliger (1) affirms, that he saw mitres at Rome with this inscription on them. Though others think that this is not any part of the name, but only signifies that this woman was, in a mysterious or mystical sense, called Babylon, &c. just as the great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, chapter xi. 8. but to me it seems to be a part of the name, as well as what follows, *Babylon the great*; that is, the great city, chapter xiv. 8. by which name the church of Rome may well be called, because of the signification of it, confusion, *Gen.* xi. 9. its doctrine and worship being a confused mixture of paganism, judaism, and christianity; and because of the pride and haughtiness of it, its tyranny and cruelty, and its forceries and idolatry; see *Isaiah* xiv. 12—14. and chapter xlvii. 6, 7, 12, 13. *Jer.* l. 38. and *the mother of harlots*; of all antichristian states and kingdoms; and is different from the heavenly Jerusalem, the Gospel church, which is the mother of true believers, *Gal.* iv. 26. or "the mother of fornications," as some copies read, and the Vulgate Latin and Eastern versions render it; that is, the author and encourager of them, as the church of Rome has been; of corporal fornication, by commanding celibacy, and forbidding marriage to priests, and setting up of brothel-houses; and of spiritual fornication or idolatry, every where required and encouraged by it: and *abominations of the earth*; of abominable doctrines and practices; all manner of wickedness, that is to be found in the earth, as murder, adultery, sodomy, perjury, &c. these, with every thing that is vile and wicked, are practised and connived at by her.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints] To see a woman drunk is a shameful sight; but to see one drunk, not with wine, but with blood, is monstrous, cruel, and shocking; the sword, when it devours, and is satiate, is said to be drunk with blood, *Jer.* xlv. 10. but

for

(1) In Scaligeran,

for a woman to be so is unexampled; and not with her own blood, as she will be, *Isaiab* xlix. 26. *Rev.* xvi. 6. but with the blood of others; and not with the blood of wicked men, but with the blood of saints; such as God the Father has set apart from everlasting, and chosen to be holy; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, or whose sins he has expiated, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations.

And with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus] The saints, whose blood is shed by antichrist, are martyrs also; but they seem to design the common people, and these the ministers of the Gospel, who are the martyrs of Jesus, both in life and death; they are the martyrs or witnesses, by their doctrine and ministry, bearing testimony to him as Jesus, a Saviour; testifying that he is the only saviour, that there is salvation in no other, in opposition to the antichristian doctrines of merit, penance, purgatory, &c. for which they have been cruelly put to death, and in great numbers, and so have sealed their doctrine by their blood. Now the woman being drunk with their blood, denotes the blood-thirstiness of the church of Rome, her greedy and insatiable desire after the blood of the saints, and her delight in it, being exceeding mad against them; and the multitude of it, shed by her, as the slaughters of the Waldenses and Albigenes, the butcheries of the duke d'Alva in the low countries, the massacres in France, Ireland, and other places, the burning of the martyrs in queen Mary's days here, with numerous other instances shew.

And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration] Not at the sight of beast, which he had seen before, but at the sight of the woman, as upon the beast; he wondered that one of her sex, generally timorous and fearful, should ride on such a monstrous creature; he was amazed at her dress, and grand appearance, whereas the church in his time consisted of poor persons, meanly arrayed; it was astonishing to him, that one bearing the name of a christian church should rise to such grandeur; and he wondered at the name upon her forehead, what the whole of that inscription should mean; but above all, at her drunkenness with the blood of the saints; at her inhumanity and cruelty, being as savage as the beast she rode on; and also at God's forbearance of her, that he, who is a pure and holy being, a lover of his saints, an avenger of his elect, should suffer such a brutish, barbarous, and blood-thirsty creature to live upon earth; see *Hab.* i. 13.

7 And the angel said unto me, Where-

fore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

And the angel said unto me] The same as in *y.* 1.

Wherefore didst thou marvel?] Which is not said by way of reproof, as questions of this kind sometimes are, *Acts* iii. 12. for John did not wonder at her with a sinful admiration so as to have her in great veneration, and to do homage and worship to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beast, chapters xiii. 3. and xvii. 8. but his admiration was an amazement, or stupefaction of mind, joined with indignation at her; and this is said by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him.

I will tell thee the mystery of the woman] That is, what is mysteriously or mystically designed by her; for till it was made known to John by the angel, it was a mystery to him; and when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in such an obscure manner, that it is only understood by the mind that has spiritual wisdom; and still remains a mystery to carnal men, just as the Gospel itself does. The hidden meaning of this woman, or the mystery of her, is told by the angel in *y.* 18.

And of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads, and ten horns] The mystical sense of the beast, its heads and horns, and which is also delivered in a mysterious manner, is given in *y.* 8—12.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not] It is added at the end of the verse where the same description is given, *and yet is*; this beast is to be understood not of the devil, who was the god of this world, *is not*, being cast out by Christ, *and yet is* in being; for he, the dragon, is distinguished from this beast, and indeed from him, the beast, has his seat, power, and authority, chapter xiii. 1, 2. nor any particular emperor, as Domitian, a cruel and savage one, who was in power in

in Vespasian's time, when he was abroad, and then was out of it upon his return, and yet afterwards was in again, being as one sent from hell, and went at last into perdition; but the Roman empire itself is intended, as we have seen, which carried and supported the papacy: and variously may this be interpreted; as that it was in the hands of the Romans originally, and long continued with them, but now *is not*, in John's time, being in the hands of Trajan, a Spaniard, *and yet is* in being, Rome being the metropolis of it: it *was* a very powerful and flourishing empire, *and is not*, being destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, *and yet is* a large empire under the jurisdiction of antichrist; it *was* an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worshipping of heathen Gods, *and is not* guilty of the same idolatrous practices, it *was*, as the worshipping of Jupiter, Mars, &c. *and yet is* much given to idolatry in another way, worshipping the virgin Mary, and other saints; it *was* under kings, consuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, and emperors, it *is not* in such a form of government, *and yet is* under its seventh head the pope; Rome *was*, but *is not* the same it has been, in some respects, *and yet is* the same, for idolatry, cruelty, &c. it has the image of old Rome, when pagan, and under the power of the dragon; and though antichrist was not risen up in the empire to an head, to supreme power and dignity, yet it was in being in the apostles times, and began to work, and by degrees to shew itself. In short, the meaning is, that this beast *was* the Roman empire, as pagan, described by a dragon with seven heads, and ten horns, with crowns on the heads, but *is not* as yet in the apostle John's time, as papal described with seven heads, and ten horns, and crowns on the horns.

And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit] Out of hell, from whence the antichristian beast has its power; see chapters xi. 8. and xiii. 2. otherwise all civil power is from God, but not antichristian power, that is from the devil.

And go into perdition] Everlasting destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; this will be the end of the beast, chap. xix. 20.

And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder] The inhabitants of the Roman empire, earthly-minded men, shall have the beast in great veneration, and follow and worship him; see chapter xiii. 3, 4, 12.

Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world] None but reprobates, not any of the elect of God, are the admirers and worshippers of antichrist; see the note on chapter xiii. 8.

When they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is] The Roman empire in glory, under the emperors, destroyed by the Goths, and revived in the papacy. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, *and yet is*.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

And here is the mind which hath wisdom] This refers either to what goes before concerning the beast, his various states, rise, and ruin, and his admirers; or to what follows after concerning the meaning of his heads and horns, or to both; and the sense is, that notwithstanding the interpretation of these things by the angel, yet it requires a large share of wisdom to understand them; and here is enough to exercise the mind that is ever so well stored with knowledge and understanding; and so the Arabic version renders it, "here it is required that one should have judgment and wisdom;" for to a man that has not, the affair will still be obscure and unintelligible. The words may be rendered, "here is the mind, he that hath wisdom;" that is, let him make use of it, as in chapter xiii. 18. and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and this is the sense, he that has wisdom;" this is the sense of the beast, and of his heads and horns; and he that has wisdom, let him consider it, and take it in, and apply it to proper persons, things and times: and so the Ethiopic version, "he that has wisdom and understanding, let him know this;" or take cognizance of it, it being a matter of importance, and attended with difficulty.

The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth] That is, they signify seven mountains, or are symbolical representations of them; just as the seven good kine, and seven good ears in Pharaoh's dream, signified seven years of plenty, and seven thin kine, and seven empty ears, seven years of famine, Gen. xli. 26, 27. As the woman is a city, ch. 18. these seven mountains, on which she sits, must be so many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but Rome? which is so famous for being built on seven hills. This is taken notice of by Virgil (*m*), Horace (*n*), Ovid (*o*), Claudian (*p*), Statius (*q*), Martial (*r*), and others;

(*m*) *Æneid*, vi.

(*n*) *In Carmine Sæculari*.

(*o*) *De*

Trist. l. 1. eleg. 4.

(*p*) *Lib.* 3. de Laud. Stilicon. l. 3.

ver. 135.

(*q*) *Syl.* l. 1. *Syl.* 2. ver. 191.

(*r*) *Lib.* 4.

ep. 53.

others; and indeed there is scarce a poet that speaks of Rome, but observes it: hence it has been sometimes called, by writers, the seven-hilled-city, and sometimes Septiceps, the seven-headed-city, which comes near to the language here: the names of the seven mountains were these, Capitulinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Cœlius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis; the four first of these were taken in by Romulus, the first founder of it, and the three last by Servius Tullius, when he enlarged it; and upon the addition of the seventh mountain there was a feast kept, called Septimoptium; and which was kept in seven places in the city (*s*), and was annually observed; and in this situation it was in John's time; for Pliny (*t*), who was cotemporary with him, expressly says, that in his time it took in seven mountains; and that this refers to a city in John's time, then reigning over the kings of the earth, is certain from *z*. 18. Now there was no imperial city, so built in his time, but Rome; for though Constantinople is built on seven hills, yet this was not in being in John's time, but was built by Constantine many years after, in imitation of Rome; and though the situation is much altered now, being in Campus Martius, it being greatly reduced, and in a less compass, yet this hinders not but that it is the same city here designed: and this confirms, that the beast before spoken of, on whom the woman sat, is the Roman empire, since she is here said to sit on the seven mountains, on which Rome, the metropolis of that empire, was built; and this shews the pope of Rome to be antichrist, the great whore, Babylon, the mother of harlots, since no other has his seat at Rome but he.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

And there are seven kings] The Arabic version renders it, "who are seven kings;" and it should be rendered, as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, "and they are seven kings;" that is, the seven heads signify seven kings also, for they have in them a double representation, first of seven mountains, and then of seven-kings; by which are meant not seven ages of the world, as from Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonish captivity; from the Babylonish captivity to Christ; from Christ to antichrist; and from antichrist to the end of the

world; the five first of which were gone in John's time, the sixth was then it being, and when the seventh shall come, it will continue for a short time: this is a foolish and absurd interpretation of the papists, who make the beast to be the devil, and these his seven heads; whereas he rather is the head, or God of the world: nor are seven emperors of Rome intended, which are differently reckoned, according to the different times John is supposed to have had this revelation. Grotius, who is followed by Hammond, supposes this was written in the times of Vespasian, and reckons them thus; Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus; the first five of these were dead in John's time, one was then, the sixth, Vespasian, the then reigning emperor, and the other, Titus, was yet to come to the empire; and when he came to it, continued but a short time, two years and two months: others, who more rightly judge that John wrote in Domitian's time, reckon them after this manner; Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva; the first five of these were dead; Domitian was then living, and Nerva, the other that was to come and succeed him, reigned but a little while, not quite two years; but to this sense must be objected that there were other emperors before either Galba or Claudius; and before John's time there were more than five fallen or dead; according to the first account, there must be nine dead, and according to the latter eleven; for before Claudius there were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius: besides, if these were the seven heads of the beast, the beast must have been long ago without any head, and consequently must have expired; whereas it is still in being, and will be under the fifth, sixth, and seventh vials, which are yet to come; it will be at the battle of Armageddon, and will be taken then, and cast alive into the lake of fire; to which may be added, that the beast, in the form in which John now saw it, was not yet risen in the times of these emperors: but by the seven heads are meant so many forms of government which took place successively in the Roman empire, and were all of them idolatrous heads, as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors, and popes; it being usual for any sort of governors, or governments and monarchies, to be called kings, *Deut.* xxxiii. 5. *Daniel* vii. 17, 23.

Five are fallen] Or ceased, are no longer in being as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes; at least, the supreme power was not lodged in any bearing either of these names in John's time.

(*s*) Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dict. l. 6. c. 27. H.E. l. 3. c. 5.

(*t*) Nat.

And one is] The pagan emperors; an heathen emperor, Domitian, then reigning, when John had this vision; and these continued to the opening of the sixth seal, which put an end to that succession, as pagan, and till the woman brought forth the man-child, or till Constantine's time.

And the other is not yet come] Which some understand of the christian emperors, who immediately succeeded the pagan ones, and were another, and different from them, as to religion, though the form of government was the same, and were not another head; for they were not an idolatrous head, on which were names of blasphemy, but another king; for from the following verse it appears, that there are eight kings, and but seven heads, and therefore one of them should seem not to be a head; and these, when they came, continued but a short time in comparison of the heathen emperors that reigned before them, and of the pope or antichrist, who was to reign after them 1260 years; for they reigned not, put them all together, more than 150 years; and especially at Rome, their stay was short, for Constantine removed from thence to Constantinople, in the nineteenth year of his empire. But these emperors, though in religion they differed from the others, yet their form of government and title were the same, and therefore must be included in the sixth head: according to some Theodoricus the Ostrogoth, and his successors, are meant, who continued about a hundred years; others have thought that the exarchs of Ravenna, who rose up upon the destruction of the western empire, are intended, and who continued but a short time; but then these had not their seat at Rome, which it seems necessary each head of this beast should have; it is better therefore to understand this of the popes of Rome, the seventh and last head of the Roman empire; these were not yet come in John's time to their supreme dignity and authority.

And when he cometh, he must continue a short space] Forty-two months, or 1260 days; that is, so many years, which, though a long time in itself, and in the account of man, yet with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and his people, it is but a short space; and so the reign of the beast, and of the ten kings with him, is said to be one hour, *v.* 12. and this is said for the comfort of the saints, and to keep up their faith and patience under their sufferings in antichristian states. Mr Daubuz makes these seven heads, or kings, signified by seven mountains, seven capital cities, which by degrees came to belong to the Roman empire; as first

Rome itself, the capital of Italy; next Carthage, the capital of Africa; then *Æge*, the capital of Macedonia; after that Antiochia, the capital of the east; then Augustodunum, the capital of the Gauls; and Alexandria, the capital of Egypt; five of these six, with the monarchies belonging to them, were fallen: one, or the first of them now, was the mistress of all; and the other seventh was to come, namely, Byzantium, or Constantinople, which continued not long. This passage is so interpreted, as also the seven heads, in chap. xiii. 1. by this writer.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth] That was in embryo in John's time, and yet was not come to its power and grandeur, is the eighth king; and this is the papacy, which takes the name of the beast, because it is the head of the beast, and the only surviving head of the beast, or Roman empire, now become papal.

And is of the seven] One of the seven heads, and the last of them, and is an idolatrous one, as the rest were, requiring and encouraging the worship of angels, of the virgin Mary, and saints departed: the pope of Rome is the eighth king, and seventh head, the latter with respect to his temporal power, and the former with respect to his ecclesiastical authority; for his government is quite of a different sort from the rest, being of a mixed kind, partly civil, and partly ecclesiastical, and therefore is signified by two beasts in the thirteenth chapter.

And goeth into perdition] Being the son of perdition, and is justly deserving of it; see the note on *v.* 8.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings] Not ten christian emperors which are reckoned up by Brightman from Constantine to Theodorus; for these did not reign with the beast, or give their kingdoms to him, and much less did they make war with the Lamb; they are rather the angels of Michael, that fought for him, the Lamb, against the dragon, and his angels, chapter xii. 7. nor ten kings that will rise up and divide the Roman empire between them, towards the end of the world, which is a sense devised by papists

papists to obscure and hide from men the true meaning of the passage; but the ten kingdoms which rose up, and into which the Roman empire was divided upon its being ruined, and torn to pieces by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals. They are the same with the *ten toes* of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the *ten horns* of the fourth beast, or kingdom, in *Dan. ii. 42.* and chapter vii. 7, 23, 24. These are differently reckoned up by interpreters: by Napier thus; Spain, France, Lombardy, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, and the exarchate of Ravenna: by Mr Mede after this manner; the Britains in Britain, under Vortimer their king; the Saxons in the same place, under Hengist; the Franks in Gallia Belgica, or Celtica, under Childeric; the Burgundians, in another part of France, under Gunderic; the Wisigoths in Aquitain, and part of Spain, under Theodoric; the Sueves and Alans in Gallæcia and Portugal, under Riciarius; the Vandals in Spain and Africa, under Genferic; the Almaines in that part of Germany called Rhetia, under Sumanus; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and after in Italy, under Theodimir; and the Greeks in the rest of the empire, under Marcianus: and by another (*u*) writer they are accounted for in this way; the Almaines in both the Rhetia, and in Pannonia, who rose in the year 356; the Ostrogoths, first in Pannonia, and then in Italy, in 377; the Wisigoths in Pannonia, and then in Italy, afterwards in France, and last of all in Spain, in 378; the Huns in Pannonia, and for some time throughout all Europe, in 378; the Britain-Romans in Britain, and afterwards the Saxons, in 406; the Sueves, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Alans, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Vandals, first in France, then in Spain, afterwards in Africa, in 407; the Burgundians in France, in 407; the Franks in France, in 410. And it is generally thought all these ten kingdoms were up by the year 450 at least. Though Dr Allix makes the epocha of them, A. D. 486, when the western empire was taken from the Romans, and fixes them in the following order; the Almaines in Rhetia and Pannonia; the Franks in Belgica; the Anglo-Saxons in Britain; the Wisigoths in Gallia Aquitania and Hispania Tarraconensis; the Sueves and Alans in Portugal; the Vandals in Africa; the Burgundians in Gallia Sequanensis; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and afterwards in Italy; the Lombards in Pannonia, and the Heruli and Turcilingi, who conquered Augustulus: and though these kingdoms were were thrown into different

forms and shapes afterwards, yet it is remarkable they were just of this number; as 1. Italy and Germany; 2. France; 3. Spain; 4. England with Ireland; 5. Scotland; 6. Hungary; 7. Poland, with Lithuania; 8. Denmark, with Sweden and Norway, Sweden being since divided; 9. Portugal; 10. The Grecian empire seized by the Ottomans. And as these kings cannot be understood of single persons at the head of these kingdoms, or of so many kings succeeding one another; so neither is it necessary to consider these kingdoms as being in the same state, and made up of the same sort of people always; it is enough that they are in the same place, and within the empire; for we may observe, that different things, at different times, are ascribed to them, or at least to some. They all are at first of one mind, and give their kingdom to the beast; then they, at least some of them, hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and yet others lament the destruction and burning of Rome, *ŷ. 16, 17.* and chapter xviii. 9.

Which have received no kingdom as yet] In John's time, when the *pagan* empire was in being, and the beast was not risen, with whom they were to reign; hence these horns have no crowns on them, chapter xii. 3.

But receive power as kings one hour with the beast] As soon as he was risen; and therefore the horns are represented with crowns upon them, chapter xiii. 1. Their rise was with the papal beast, who rose not to his supreme power and dignity until the western emperor, which let and hindered, was removed out of the way; which was done by the barbarous nations, who set up these kingdoms, which made way for the lordly and tyrannical government of the pope of Rome; so that he and they rose up together: and this may be meant by the *one hour*; namely, that at one and the same hour or season, he came to his supreme authority and grandeur, and they received their kingly power with him; or this may denote the time of their continuance in their honour and greatness; it was but for an hour, or a short time, as that phrase sometimes signifies, *Philem. 15.* and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "for one hour;" to which agrees the Arabic version, "and their power shall be of one hour;" and this shall be *as kings*; for they only have the title of kings, but not sovereign power; they are vassals to the beast, the pope, who reigns over them, *ŷ. 18.* and sets up kings in these kingdoms, and deposes them at pleasure; exalting himself above all that is called God, or above all civil magistrates; so that these have only the name, not the thing; they are as kings, and look like

(u) De Excidio Antichristi apud Poli Synops. in loc.

like such, but are not really so; though what power they have, they receive, not from the beast, but from God; the beast receives his power and authority, as well as seat, from the dragon; but civil power and magistracy is from God, who suffers these princes, and gives them up to such stupidity as to give their kingdom to the beast, and to exercise their power as he directs.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

[These have one mind] The princes of these kingdoms, and their subjects, become, in time, of one religion; first they were Arians, and then Papists; and for a long series of time there was great unity between them, with respect to religious sentiments, being zealously attached to the church of Rome, its principles and practices.

And shall give their power and strength unto the beast] The papal antichrist, the eighth king, and seventh head; to him they have given power to exercise all ecclesiastical authority in their kingdoms; as to ordain bishops, and deliver the pall to whom they will; to excommunicate offenders, and even lay their kingdoms under an interdict when they pleased; and have assisted and defended the popes of Rome with all their force, with all their might and main, and to the utmost of their power, and have engaged in what have been called the holy wars, at their motion; they have given their riches and wealth, which are called the forces of strength, *Job xxxvi. 19.* which they have, by various methods, drained them of; hence the whore of Rome came to be decked with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; yea, they have given them their kingdoms, and have received them from them, and become tributary to them.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

[These shall make war with the Lamb] The Lord Jesus Christ, so often spoken of in this book under this character, chapters v. 6, 12. and vi. 1. and vii. 10. and xiv. 1. And this war is not to be understood of a war with him personally, or of that last and decisive battle at Armageddon, in which will be the kings of the earth; but of a war with his members, of their persecuting of the saints, and faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, within their jurisdictions, being insti-

gated to it by the beast, under whose influence they are.

And the Lamb shall overcome them] Partly thro' the constancy of his people, who will not love their lives to the death, but freely lay them down for him; nor can any thing separate them from the love of Christ, or prevail upon them to desert him, his truths and ordinances, cause and interest, but are more than conquerors through him, and so he overcomes in them; and partly through a reformation which he effects, as in some of those kingdoms already, as Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, Ireland, and others, and will do in others hereafter; see *1. 16.*

For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings] He is so by nature, as God and creator, to whom the kingdom of nature and providence belongs; and by office as mediator, being made higher than the kings of the earth; hence he is an over-match for them, they cannot stand before him; this is a reason why he overcomes them, and it cannot be thought it should be otherwise: this lamb is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and when he rouses himself, and stirs up his wrath, and exerts his power, kings and great men flee from him; see *Rev. vi. 15—17. Psalm ii. 6, 9—12.* This is a proof of Christ's proper deity, the same titles being given to him, the Word and Son of God, as to God himself, *Revelation xix. 16. 1 Timothy vi. 15. 16.*

And they that are with him] His servants and his soldiers, that fight under him, and abide by him,

Are called, and chosen, and faithful] They are chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter, and so stand opposed to the admirers of the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life, *1. 8.* for this is to be understood of their eternal election, and not of their separation by effectual vocation in time, for that is expressed by their being called; and though their calling is here set before election, as in *2 Peter i. 10.* yet it does not precede it; the Arabic version reads, "chosen, called, faithful;" first *chosen* by God the Father, then *called*, not with the bare external call by the ministry of the word, for so many are called, and not chosen; but by special grace to special benefits, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irresistible, and without repentance; and being called they remain *faithful*: the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Christ; which faith they have bestowed on them in effectual vocation, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or else, that they are persons

of integrity and uprightness, that are on the side of Christ; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made so by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Gospel and ordinances, and in his cause and interest, even unto death; and so this character is expressive of the perseverance of those who are chosen and called, even unto the end.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

And he saith unto me] That is, the angel, who proposed to give John the interpretation of the vision, he went on with it as follows:

The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth] Ver. 1. see the note there.

Are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues] Denoting the vast multitude of people, of which the several kingdoms, of divers languages, consist, which belong to the jurisdiction of Rome papal: it is an eastern way of speaking, and is particularly used to express the various kingdoms, and infinite number of people belonging to the Babylonish monarchy, which was an emblem of the antichristian state, *Dan.* iii. 4, 7, 29. and chap. iv. 1. and these are compared to waters, to many waters; which phrase sometimes is used for the sea, *Psal.* cvii. 23. because of the vast numbers of them; the whole world wondered after the beast, and the kings and inhabitants of the earth have been subject to the see of Rome; and because of their over-bearing force, carrying all before them; see *Isaiah* viii. 7, 8. *Jer.* xlviii. 2. *Rev.* xiii. 3, 4. and because, like waters, they are continually upon the flux, one generation succeeding another; and because of their instability, fickleness, and inconstancy, as in religion, so in their constitution, they will hate the whore they love; and as they frequently change and alter in their form, at last they will utterly cease: so the Jews (*w*) interpret many waters, in *Cant.* viii. 7. of all people, and of the kings of the earth, and of the nations of the world; and they say, that many waters never signify any other than all the nations, and those that are appointed over them (*x*). So, *he drew me out of many waters*, *Psal.* xviii. 16. is by the Targum on the place explained, "he delivered me from many people." And so *Psal.* xlv. 4. is paraphrased by the Targumist; "people, as rivers, and their streams shall come, and make glad the city of

"the Lord;" see the Targum on *Isaiah* viii. 7. and in *Ezek.* xxxii. 2. where it is observed kingdoms are compared to waters (*y*).

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast] Ver. 3. and which are interpreted of ten kings, *y.* 12. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "and the beast;" and then the sense is, that the ten kings and states in particular, who have defended antichrist, and the whole empire in general, which has bore up and supported the whore of Rome.

These shall hate the whore] Her principles and sentiments, her doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, her wicked practices, her idolatries, adulteries, murders, and thefts; they will repent of their fornications with her, and cease from them; their love will be turned to hatred, and the latter will be greater than ever the former was, like Amnon's to Tamar; and as it usually is with men towards harlots, when they see their follies, and how they have been deceived and abused by them.

And shall make her desolate] Leave her, quit her communion; no more commit fornication with her, or join with her in her idolatrous worship; but come out from that apostate church; and renounce all fellowship with her, and persuade and engage as many as they can influence to do the same.

And naked] Strip her of her purple, scarlet colour, gold, pearls, and precious stones; cease to give their power and strength, withhold their taxes and tribute, deprive her of her power and authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in their realms, and take away even her patrimony from her; and not only so, but expose her shame and filthiness, her abominable principles and practices to all the world; which has been in part done already.

And shall eat her flesh] Not literally, but mystically; not out of love, but hatred; they shall take that to themselves, and make use of, which have fattened her, as bishoprics, and other benefices, lands, endowments belonging to abbeys, and monasteries, and other religious houses; an instance and example of which we have in king Henry the eighth's time; so some understand this phrase

(w) Targum in *Cant.* viii. 7. *Shirhashirim Rabba*, fol. 26. 1.

(x) Zohar in *Gen.* fol. 51. 3. & *Raya Mehimna* in *ibid.* & in *Num.* fol. 105. 3. *Bemidbar Rabba*, §. 2. fol. 179. 4.

(y) *Yalkut Simeoni*, par. 2. fol. 93. 2.

phrase of devouring the substance of others in *Psalms* xxvii. 2. *Dan.* vii. 5. So the Targumists often interpret *flesh and fatness*, by "riches, goods, or substance," as *Isaiah* xvii. 4. *Micah* iii. 3. *Zech.* xi. 9.

And burn her with fire] Alluding to the law in *Lev.* xxi. 9. which required, that the daughter of a priest, that played the whore, should be burnt with fire; and this is to be understood literally of burning the city of Rome, the seat of the whore, with fire; of which see chapter xviii. 8, 9, 18. It has been very near being burn in times past, as by Alaricus the Goth, Attila the Hun, Genserich the Vandal, and by Totilas, and in later times by Charles the fifth; and would have been, had they not been dissuaded or diverted from it; and which were so many preludes and warnings of its future fate: and we may learn from hence, that Rome, and the Romish antichrist, will not be destroyed by the Turks, but by the christians; and by the same states, and kingdoms, and princes, by which the whore of Rome has been supported in her grandeur, power, and authority, who will revolt from popery, and embrace the pure Gospel of Christ: and this shows, that the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire has been divided, will subsist in this form at the destruction of Rome; wherefore, it has been rightly observed by some, that not one of these kingdoms shall ever be able to rise to universal monarchy. France has been for many years attempting it, but in vain; and we may sit down easy and satisfied, assuring ourselves with the greatest confidence, that all attempts this way will be fruitless; there never will be another universal monarchy on earth, but that of Christ's; see *Dan.* 37, 39, 40. and chap. vii. 3, 23, 27.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will] By doing the preceding things to the whore of Rome, whose destruction is according to the will of God; it is his approving will, what he likes of, and will be well-pleased with; it is his will of command, what he will order to be done, chap. xviii. 6, 7. and it is his determining will, his will of purpose, his decree, what he has resolved shall be done; he has fixed the time of her reign, and longer than that she shall not continue: and these kings in destroying her, will not do so much their own will, as the will of God, and God

will put it into their hearts to do it; he will work in them both to will and to do; he will fill them with hatred to her; he will incline their minds to do the above things, as it will be in the power of their hands to do them; he who has the hearts of all men, and even of kings in his hands, and can turn them as rivers of water, will move them hereunto, *Prov.* xxi. 1. he that turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people Israel, *Psalms* cv. 25. will turn the hearts of these kings to hate the whore, and do unto her as is here predicted; and the same God will do this, who has, on the other hand, already put into their hearts to do the following things.

And do agree] This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is the same with that of having one mind, *13.* that is, being of the same religion; God giving them up to a reprobate mind, to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which must be understood not of the same individuals, but of their predecessors; unless this is to be interpreted of their agreeing together against the whore, to pull her down, and set up the pure worship and service of God; for this is a blessing of grace from God, who gives his people one heart and one way, that they may fear him, *Jer.* xxxii. 39. but the former sense seems best, since it follows,

And give their kingdom unto the beast] The eighth king, and seventh head, the pope of Rome; to whom they have given their power and strength in things civil and ecclesiastical, their wealth and riches; and have received their crowns from him, and have held their kingdoms by him, and become tributary to him: and this is done, and will be,

Until the words of God shall be fulfilled] Concerning the afflictions of his church and people, and the reign of antichrist, for the space of forty and two months, chapters xi. 2. and xiii. 5. all which while they are fulfilling the secret will of God, unknown to them, and yet act against his revealed will, and break his commands; just as the Jews, ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Testament, fulfilled them in condemning Christ, *Acts* xiii. 27. That God should put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfil his will, in destroying the whore of Rome, is easily received; but there seems some difficulty that he should put it into their hearts, to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, which was sinful: now this he did, not by insuling sin into them, which is contrary to his pure and holy nature; but by leaving them, and giving them up to their own hearts lusts; stirring up, and moving upon their minds, and

directing the motions of it, to such and such objects; which they readily and voluntarily fell in with; and yet the concern of God herein does not, nor do his decrees about sin infringe the liberty of the will in acting, or excuse the sinfulness of the action, or make God the author of sin; as the instances of selling of Joseph by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, shew.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

And the woman which thou sawest] Ver. 3. as there described,

Is that great city] Often mentioned in this book; great Babylon, the city of Rome, chapters xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvi. 19.

Which reigneth over the kings of the earth] Which then reigned in John's time over the kings of the earth; and this clearly points out the city of Rome, for there was no other city then, but that, which reigned over the kings of the earth; that was then the metropolis of the Roman empire, to which the whole world was subject; and therefore it is called all the world, *Luke ii. 1.* and since, all the kings of the empire have been under the jurisdiction of Rome papal. It was formerly called, *urbs regum*, "a city of kings (z)," either for the reason in the text, or because its inhabitants looked like kings.

C H A P. XVIII.

This chapter gives an account of the fall of Babylon, and of the lamentation of many, and of the joy of others by reason of it; which account is published by several angels: the first that declares her fall, is described by his original, descending from heaven; by the great power he had; by his resplendent glory, and by his mighty cry in publishing her destruction; which is illustrated by the desolate condition she will be in upon her fall; the reasons of which are given, because the nations and kings of the earth had committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth were enriched by her luxury, *ŷ. 1—3.* Another voice is heard from heaven, calling upon the people of God, first to come out of her, lest partaking of her sins they should share in her plagues, seeing her iniquities had reached to heaven, and were remembered before God; and next to take full vengeance on her, because she had glorified herself, lived deliciously, and in great security,

(z) *Justin. l. 18. c. 2.*

ŷ. 4—7. And then follows a continuation of the account of her destruction, what her plagues would be, death, mourning, famine, and fire; and which would be sudden, in one hour, and certain, from the power and justice of God, *ŷ. 8.* Next follow the lamentations of the kings, merchants, and masters of ships, because of her greatness, riches, and merchandize, which are all come to nothing, *ŷ. 9—19.* And then the church, the saints, apostles, and prophets, are called upon to rejoice at the vengeance taken on her, *ŷ. 20.* upon which a mighty angel appears, who by an action signifies the manner of her destruction, and the irrecoverableness of her state and condition, *ŷ. 21.* and declares her utter ruin, by affirming that nothing that was either delightful or profitable, or necessary or comfortable, should any more be found in her; giving the reasons of it, because of her luxury, idolatry, and blood-shed, *ŷ. 22—24.*

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And after these things] The vision of the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast, and the interpretation of both by the angel.

I saw another angel] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, though the several things said of this angel agree with him; nor one of the ministering spirits, though the characters of him will also suit with one of them; but rather a minister of the Gospel, or a set of Gospel ministers, who will arise a little before the downfall of Babylon, in the spiritual reign of Christ; though not the same with the angel of fire, chap. xiv. 18. as some have thought, because of his illustrious appearance, and the loudness of his voice; but the same with the angel, or third thundering voice in chap. xiv. 6. for not only the times of both agree, but the self-same words are expressed by one as by the other; and this angel is distinct from him that showed John the preceding vision, and gave him the interpretation of it, and from all the seven angels that had the vials, and is described as follows: and first by the place from whence he came, John saw him

Come down from heaven] Denoting the suddenness of his appearance and cry; he came down at once, and cried out immediately; the subject of his cry, the destruction of Babylon, being what will be at an unawares; and also the commission and authority of the ministers signified by him; who will have their warrant from heaven to say what

what they will deliver; so that this likewise expresses the truth of their message, since both that and they come from heaven.

Having great power] To do great work, to declare the fall of Babylon the great: or "having great authority;" being sent from the King of kings, in his name, as his ambassador, to proclaim what shortly will come to pass; an event of the greatest importance to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the comfort of his people.

And the earth was lightened with his glory] See Ezek. xliii. 2. by which is meant the glorious Gospel of Christ, the light of which will at this time be very great: these ministers will run to and fro the earth, and knowledge will be increased, and the earth will be filled with it: the Arabic version reads, "with the splendor of his countenance;" and the Ethiopic version, "with the splendor of his countenance, and his glory;" see *Isaiab* lx. 1—3.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice] Which shews not only the vehemence and affection of the ministers of the word, who will publish what follows, but the greatness and importance of it; and this loud voice may be, as for the sake of the whole church in general, that all may hear, so for the sake of those of the Lord's people in particular, that will be in Babylon at this time; and it may have regard to that deep sleep and spirit of slumber that Babylon itself will be in, which notwithstanding this loud cry, will remain insensible of its ruin till it comes upon her, as was the case of old Babylon, *Jer.* li. 39—41.

Saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen] The whole world is not designed by Babylon, for it is distinguished from all nations in the following verse; nor Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen long before John saw this vision, but Rome papal; see the note on chap. xiv. 8. so the woman is called in chapter xvii. 5. who sits on seven mountains, and is that great city, the city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, *Y.* 9, 18. this is said to be fallen, because in a very little time after this declaration it will fall; for as yet it was not destroyed, since after this the Lord's people are called upon to come out of her, and are bid to reward her double; and it is declared, that her plagues should come in one day,

and she should be burnt with fire; and an angel after this throws a millstone into the sea, saying, that so should Babylon be thrown down, *Y.* 4, 6, 8, 21. and it is repeated to denote the certainty and utter destruction of her: and which is more fully expressed by what follows,

And is become the habitation of devils] As old Babylon was of satyrs, *Isaiab* xiii. 21. demons which appeared in a hairy form, like goats, and the word is rendered devils in *Lev.* xvii. 7. and the inhabitants of Rome now are no other; the pope and his cardinals, the priests, jesuits, monks, and friars, are the spirits of devils, and their doctrines the doctrines of devils; see chap. xvi. 14. *1 Tim.* iv. 1.

And the hold of every foul spirit] Devils are frequently called unclean spirits, and these appear in desert and desolate places, *Matt.* xii. 43. where they are either of choice, or rather are obliged to it; and so the word translated *hold* signifies a prison, or place of confinement; and such as are comparable to unclean spirits, now haunt and abound in Rome, and its territories; see chapter xvi. 13.

And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird] Such as vultures, kites, owls, &c. which generally reside in desolate and uninhabited places; the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, "and the hold, or seat of every unclean and hateful beast;" and so the desolation of old Babylon, is described by wild beasts and doleful creatures dwelling in it, *Isaiab* xiii. 21, 22. *Jer.* l. 39. and li. 37. Some consider all this as a reason of the destruction of Babylon or Rome, because it now is the residence of persons comparable to devils, foul spirits, hateful birds, and beasts of prey; but this account rather describes its state and case in which it will be after its ruin, being never more to be inhabited by men, in allusion to old Babylon, *Isaiab* xiii. 19, 20. *Jer.* li. 62.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication] That is, all the nations of the Roman empire, the European nations, otherwise the pagan and Mahometan nations have not; but these have, being made to drink by her, and made drunk therewith, that is, with her idolatries; see the note on chap. xiv. 8.

And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her] Joined with her in her idolatrous worship and practices, and encouraged the same, and obliged their subjects to them in their dominions; see the note on chap. xvii. 2.

And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies] Or luxury; which is not to be understood in a literal sense; though it is true that many merchants, in all ages, have enriched themselves by sending their commodities to Rome, where, through the vast consumption and luxuriousness of the place, they have bore a good price; but this is to be interpreted of spiritual merchants; these are such who do not merchandize by sea, but are land-merchants, the merchants of the earth, and are said to be *the great men of the earth*, y. 23. such as are equal to princes, lords, and nobles; such are the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; though the inferior clergy of the Romish church, who are under these, may be included: to which may be added, that one part of their wares is said to be *the souls of men*, y. 13. which plainly shows what sort of merchants these are; they are such who make merchandize of men, and pretend to sell them heaven, and the salvation of their souls; these are they that deal in pardons and indulgences, which they sell to ignorant people, and for a sum of money say mass to fetch souls out of purgatory: all things have been saleable at Rome, crucifixes, priests, altars, temples, prayers, heaven, Christ, yea God himself, as the poet Mantuan expresses it; and because of these idolatries, and wicked practices, Rome will be at last destroyed.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

And I heard another voice from heaven] Either of another, or of the same angel, or rather of God, or Christ himself, since the persons addressed are called his people.

Saying, Come out of her, my people] Meaning either his elect ones, till now uncalled, being such whom God had chosen for his people, and were so by virtue of the covenant of grace, were given to Christ as his people, and were redeemed by him, though till this call, in an unconverted state; or else such who had been secretly called by the grace of God, but had not made a public profession of the Gospel, nor bore an open testimony against the Romish idolatry; for as the Lord had a righteous Lot in Sodom, and saints

where Satan's seat was, Rome pagan, so he will have a people in Rome papal, at the time when its destruction draws near; and these will be called out, not only in a spiritual sense, to quit the communion of the church, to forsake its idolatries, and not touch the unclean thing, separate themselves from her, and bear a testimony against her doctrines and worship, but in a literal sense, locally; they shall be bid to come out of her, as Lot was ordered to go out of Sodom before its burning, and the people of the Jews out of Babylon before the taking of it, *Jer.* 1. 8. and chap. li. 45. to which reference is here had; and as the christians were called out of Jerusalem before the destruction of it: this shows the particular knowledge the Lord has of his people, be they where they will, and the gracious care he takes of them, that they perish not with others; and that it is his will they should be a separate people from the rest of the world; and this call of his sufficiently justifies the protestants in their separation from the church of Rome, and every separation from any apostate church.

That ye be not partakers of her sins] By conniving at them, or committing the same; and all such are partakers of them, and have fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, that are in the communion of that church; and those that dwell at Rome are in great danger of being so, and cannot well avoid it; yea, even those that only go to see it, and stay but for a time in it, and that not only through the strength and influence of example, but through the force of power and authority.

And that ye receive not of her plagues] Or punishments; the seven last plagues, which belong to her, the vials of which will be poured out upon one or other of the antichristian states, and the fifth particularly will fall upon Rome, the seat of the beast, and is what is here referred to.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

For her sins have reached unto heaven] Or "have followed unto heaven;" one after another, in one age after another, until they have been as it were heaped up together, and have reached the heavens; the phrase denotes the multitude of them, God's knowledge and notice of them, and the cry of them to him; see *Gen.* xviii. 20. *Jon.* i. 2. the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, "have cleaved, or glued," and so the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have read; her sins were as it were folded together, and stuck fast to her, and being joined and linked together, made a long chain, and reached to heaven,

ven, and cleaved to that, and cried for vengeance.

And God hath remembered her iniquities] And is about to punish her for them; for as forgiveness of sin is signified by a non-remembrance of it, so punishment of sin by a remembrance of it, and of the persons that commit it; see chap. xvi. 19.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

Reward her even as she rewarded you] This is spoken to the people of God, who are before called out of Babylon; and the chief of them are the seven angels with the seven last plagues of the wrath of God, and the same with the ten kings that will burn the whore with fire; these are called upon to take vengeance, by way of retaliation for what she had done to them, in allusion to what is said of old Babylon, *Jer. l. 15*, and chap. li. 24, 35. and must be understood not of what she will have done to them personally, but to their predecessors in the faith of Christ in former ages; that as she had hated them, and made war with them, so now they should hate her, and make war with her; and as she had stripped them naked of their clothes, and spoiled them of their worldly goods and substance, so now they should strip her naked of her harlot's attire, of her gold, silver, and precious stones, and make her and her territories desolate; and as she has burnt many of the precious saints in the flames, as here in England, and elsewhere, so now they shall utterly burn her with fire; and as she has shed the blood of the righteous, and drank it, and been drunk with it, they shall give her blood to drink; and as she hath killed multitudes with the sword, so now shall they kill her and her children; see chapter xiii. 12. nor is this contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and the spirit of christianity, which will not admit of revenge, *Matt. v. 38, 39. Rom. xii. 17, 19—21*. since this will not be private, but public revenge, inflicted by christian princes and magistrates, who are ministers of God, and revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil.

And double unto her double according to her works] The meaning is not to inflict upon her a punishment doubly greater than her sins, for this would be contrary to the justice of God; nor does ever God punish men in this life more, but less than their iniquities deserve; nor can any temporal punishment be doubly greater than sin, which deserves eternal death; and with this she will be punished hereafter, and therefore will not have

her full punishment now, and much less a greater than her sins required; to which may be added, that this will be according to her works, her wicked works, and therefore will not exceed the demerit of her sins: but the sense is, that if it was possible to be done, they should use her with double severity to that she had used them with; seeing her sins deserved a severer treatment than even they had had from her; the phrase signifies an abundant and utter destruction, a punishment which was suitable and sufficient; see *Isaiah xl. 2. Jer. xvi. 18. and chap. xvii. 18.* and it suggests, that they should not spare her, nor pity her, but use her with the greatest severity imaginable, it being not possible to exceed her due deserts, or what her works required.

In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double] Not in the cup of her abominations, her errors, idolatries, and wickedness; but in the cup of afflictions and trouble, which she wrung out to the people of God, in that give her double portion: the sense is the same as before.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

How much she hath glorified herself] And acted the proud and haughty part in exalting herself above all emperors, kings, and princes, above all kingdoms and states, and also above all churches, assuming arrogant titles, and even blasphemous names; see chap. xiii. 1, 5.

And lived deliciously] In a very luxuriant manner, as the popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars have done; some being clothed in purple and scarlet, and in gold and silver, and all living upon the fat of the land, and in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness.

So much torment and sorrow give her] By pulling down her pride, which goes before a fall, than which nothing could more torment and afflict her; by stripping her of her fine clothes and rich apparel; and by taking away her fat benefices from her, which will cut her to the heart; and by burning her with fire, which will be very excruciating.

For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen] A lady of kingdoms, as in *Isaiah xlvii. 5.* to which the reference is, having a temporal power and authority over the kings of the earth, and a spiritual jurisdiction over all churches, apostate ones, being the mother of harlots; and her sitting as such,

as it well agrees with the whore on many waters, and the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast and seven mountains, who are all the same, and is very suitable to antichrist, who pretends to sit in Peter's chair, and does sit in the temple of God, as if he was God; so it is expressive of her empire and government over nations and churches, and of the continuance of it, as she imagines, see *Isa.* xlvii. 7. and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "I shall reign always:" to which she adds,

And am no widow] Nor never shall be, as she flatters herself, see *Isaiah* xlvii. 8. Where she the true spouse of Christ, as she boasts herself, she indeed would be no widow, for Christ is an everlasting and never-dying husband; but she is the whore of the kings of the earth, and though she fancies she shall be no widow, that is, bereft of people and power, see *Lam.* i. 1. because she now sits on many waters, people, multitudes, and nations and tongues; yet ere long, like old Babylon, she will have no men in her, but will be inhabited by devils, foul spirits, and hateful birds.

And shall see no sorrow] Through loss of children, power, and authority; see *Isaiah* xlvii. 8. but in this also she will be mistaken; her children will be killed with death, as is threatened to Jezebel, chap. ii. 23. and her plagues shall come upon her at once: now these words may be considered either as spoken by her when in the height of her power and glory, as she was about three or four hundred years ago; or just before her destruction, which seems to be the case, and looks as if she would regain her power, and be in *statu quo* before her utter ruin; see the note on chapter xi. 2.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day] The seven last plagues, which will be in a very little time executed upon her, very speedily and very quickly one after another, if not altogether; and particularly the fifth vial may be respected, as well as the plagues that follow; see *Isaiah* xlvii. 9.

Death] Not the second death, which will not be till after the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the beast will be taken, and cast alive into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death; but either the pestilence, which is called so, chap. vi. 8. or rather death by the sword, war, which will be brought

upon her, and in which she and her children will be slain with the sword.

And mourning] For the loss of her children, the destruction of the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, and for the darkness of his kingdom, the inhabitants of which shall be in such pain, as to gnaw their tongues for it.

And famine] Which generally attends war, at least sieges; and it looks as if Rome would be besieged a while before it is destroyed, which will produce a grievous famine in it; this is opposed to her living deliciously, as well as the two former are to her notion of sitting a queen for ever, and knowing no sorrow.

And she shall be utterly burned with fire] The burning of Rome has been attempted several times, by different persons, and has been burnt in part, but not wholly, see the note on chap. xvii. 16. but now it will be entirely destroyed by fire; either by fire from heaven, as Sodom and Gomorrah were; or by fire breaking out of the earth, it being very manifest that there are Volcanos, burning mountains, and subterraneous fires in those parts, which seem to be so many preparations in nature for the burning of that city; or rather by the ten kings, who will set fire to it; and it may be by all these ways. The Jews have a notion that at the coming of the Messiah, Rome will be burnt (a), as Sodom has been; you will find, say they (b), that of Sodom and of that kingdom (Rome, of which they are speaking, and which they afterwards call the fourth kingdom) it is decreed concerning them both, that they *should be burnt with fire*; of Sodom, *Gen.* xix. 24. and of the fourth kingdom (Rome) *Isaiah* xxxiv. 9.

For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her] The Alexandrian copy reads, "that has judged;" and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; that is, has purposed and determined her destruction, and therefore it is unavoidable; he that has resolved upon it, and foretold it, and has adjudged her to it, is the Lord God Almighty; and he is able to execute the sentence determined and pronounced, and it is impossible she should escape: it may be understood of Christ the mighty God, the judge of quick and dead; see *Jer.* i. 34.

9 And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her,

(a) Zohar in *Gen.* fol. 74. 3. & in *Num.* fol. 86. 1.

(b) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 43. 2.

her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication] Idolatry, chapters xvii. 2. and xviii. 3.

And lived deliciously with her] Ver. 3, 7. joining with her in her sensual, as well as in her idolatrous practices.

Shall bewail her, and lament for her] Shall mourn inwardly, and by various gestures outwardly express their sorrow at her desolation; see Ezek. xxvii. 30—32. these will not be the ten kings who will burn the whore with fire, and then repent of what they have done, and weep over her, as Titus did at the destruction of Jerusalem, as some popish writers have fancied, for they will hate the whore, and eat her flesh; but earthly and idolatrous kings, who will be in the communion of the church of Rome.

When they shall see the smoke of her burning] As Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah go up like the smoke of a furnace; by which they will perceive that her judgment is come, and her ruin begun.

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment] Left they themselves should share in it, who have partook of her sins; either they will not be in a capacity to help her, or they will be dispirited, and will be in awe and dread of God's righteous judgments.

Saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city!] It will aggravate their sorrow, when they reflect upon the former grandeur, magnificence, power, and authority of the city and see of Rome, so often called in this book the great city; and so it is by other writers; the Jews call it so: they say (e), "when the Messiah comes, the kings of the world shall be gathered to קרתא רבא, "the great city of Rome;" and "the holy blessed God will cast upon them fire and hail, and great hail-stones (with which compare chap. xvi. 21.) and they shall perish from the world, except those kings that do not come there." It is common with the Jewish writers to call the Roman empire Edom; and Magdiel, one of the dukes of Edom, Genesis xxxvi. 43. who has his name from greatness, is interpreted by one of their commentators (d) of

Rome; the reason of which, another of them says (e), is because Rome is become great above all kingdoms: the mount of Esau in Obad. y. 21. is interpreted ית כרכא רבא, "that great city of Esau," which is Rome (f); and the same epithet it has in the Talmud (g); and Prophecy calls it τὴν μεγάλην πόλιν, "that great city," without making mention of its name, as here; so among the Latins (h), *Magnæ spes altera Romæ*.

For in one hour is thy judgment come] The Ethiopic version reads, "the hour of her judgment;" the time of her punishment fixed by God; but the sense is, that her vengeance was suddenly come upon her; this is the judgment of the great whore, which the angel proposed to show to John, chap. xvii. 1.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her] Who these are, see the note on y. 3. and what their lamentation, y. 16. the reason of their weeping and mourning follows.

For no man buyeth their merchandise any more] What their merchandise is, is expressed in the two next verses; and this shows that it is not to be understood merely in a literal sense; for such commodities in general as are there mentioned, if they go not off at one place, they will at another; and the decay of trade in one city does not put a stop to business all the world over: and often so it is, that the ruin of commerce in one place is the rise of it in another; and all the things hereafter spoken of, excepting the last article, are what will be merchandised in one place or another to the end of the world; unless the sense should be, that no man at Rome, and the parts adjacent, will buy of this merchandise any more; but tho' they should not, this could not be cause of such lamentation as is afterwards expressed, since their goods might be taken off elsewhere; but it looks as if this must be understood of such kind of wares as will be disused and despised all the world over, and they will meet with no customers any where to deal with them.

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of

(e) Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3.

(d) Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43.

(e) Abshinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3. (f) Jarchi in Obadiah, ver. 21.

(g) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 27. 2.

(h) Servius in Virgil, Eclog. 6. p. 67.

of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls] Things for treasure and ornament, and with which the great whore is said to be decked, chap. xvii. 4. and literally understood, may denote the vast riches which these spiritual merchants, or factors for Rome, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars bring into their own coffers and the pope's, by the trade they drive in her wares, with the souls of men; and may have also a regard to what their images, chalices, crowns, mitres, &c. are made of, and what some of them are adorned with; and as Tyre, to whom the reference is in the several particulars of this account, had her merchants for these things, *Ezek. xxvii. 12, 16, 22.* so Mr Brightman thinks that in these, and in some following ones, Spain is Rome's merchant, which fetches them from the Indies for her: but these things mystically taken, sometimes design the doctrines of the Gospel, *1 Cor. iii. 12.* and which are to be preferred to, and more to be esteemed than thousands of gold and silver; and these Rome's merchants pretended to deliver out; but instead of them, they put off wood, hay, and stubble, yea doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy; and sometimes the grace of God is meant, *Rev. iii. 18.* which is more precious than gold that perisheth; and this they pretend to convey to men *ex opere operato*, in the ordinances, as baptism, &c. and to communicate the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, for money, which is direct simony; yea, they pretend to sell eternal life, nay Christ and God himself.

And fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet] Things which belong to apparel and dress; and literally taken, the *fine linen* is for their copes, wore by bishops and by chantors, and sub-chantors, and for surplices wore by their priests, in imitation of the Jewish priests, and for mass-clothes, &c. the *purple, silk, and scarlet*, were for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; so the woman on the scarlet-coloured beast is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet, chap. xvii. 4. Tyre had its merchants for these, *Ezek. xxvii. 7, 16, 24.* the *fine linen and silk* may mystically denote the holy lives, good works, and merits of the saints, those of them called works of supererogation, which become the church's stock, and they sell out for money to others that want; which is a monstrous kind of ware, and a dreadful imposition upon men, since men cannot be saved and justified by works; and the best of men are so far from having

a redundancy of works, that in every thing they sin and offend, and are greatly deficient; and they are so far from helping others, that they are unprofitable servants themselves: the purple and scarlet may signify the blood of Christ, which they pretend to sell in the mass; nay, they have pretended to have had the very liquid blood of Christ, which they have carried in a chrystal glass, thick on one side, and transparent on the other; and so could not be seen by persons in a mortal sin, until they had given a good deal of money, and then the clear side was by sleight of hand turned to them; and which was no other than the blood of a duck, renewed weekly by the priest; which trick for a long time brought in vast sums of money, and was detected at Hales in Gloucestershire, in Henry the eighth's time; or these may intend the sufferings of the saints, which likewise come into the treasure of the church, and are at its dispose for money, the virtue of which being very great for the salvation of mens souls.

And all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble] Things for utensils and furniture, not so much for their houses, as for their churches; Tyre had its merchants for these, *Ezek. xxvii. 5, 6, 12, 13, 15.* *Thyine wood*, Pliny says (i), was very durable, and of it the rafters of ancient temples were made; and may design such like lasting and odoriferous wood as cypress, cedar, &c. used in the popish churches, for the embellishing of them, and for images in them; it may be the same with the wood of the Almug, or Algom trees, since these are rendered *thyine wood* in the Vulgate Latin version in *1 Kings x. 11, 12.* *2 Chron. ix. 10, 11.* *Vessels of ivory*, may be boxes made thereof, in which the hosts is put, and the reliques of saints are preserved: and *vessels of most precious wood, or stone*, as the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, and of *brass, iron, and marble*, may intend various vessels used in their churches; as vessels for holy water, fountains of marble, and other valuable stones, for baptism, censers of iron and brass to burn incense in. Cocceius thinks that by these vessels of different materials are meant good men; who are like sweet-smelling wood for the fragrantcy of their doctrines and lives; and like iron, brass, and marble for their courage, constancy, and patience; and who have been canonized for saints, which has brought in much money into the pope's coffers: this is a practice in imitation of the heathens, who deified men,

and

(i) Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 16.

and set them over particular days and affairs; and the privileges of such canonization among the papists are, that such a saint has his name set in the calendar in red letters, may have churches and altars dedicated to him, and his image set up in them, and a holyday be kept for him, and may be prayed to, and worshipped; a practice dreadfully derogatory to the glory of Christ's person and office, but is that in which these merchants have found their account; for through references, commissions, and reports, for proof of the saints character and miracles, his friends are at very great expence before the affair is issued, especially if rich; our king Henry the seventh was very desirous of having his kinsman Henry the sixth canonized, and solicited the pope for it, but he would not do it under fifteen hundred ducats of gold, which the king thought was too much, and so declined it.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense] Things for delight and pleasure, for the gratifying of the senses; *cinnamon and odours* were used for presuming, *Proverbs* vii. 17. anointing with *oil* was used at feasts, *Psalms* xxiii. 5. and *frankincense*, or censings, at banquets, and for the regaling of persons after food (*k*): these customs obtained among the eastern people. Tyre had its merchants for these things, *Ezekiel* xxvii. 19, 22. and Mr Brightman thinks Italy is Rome's merchant in these, which it fetches from Greece, Arabia, and Egypt; it may be these rather respect the ecclesiastical use of them: *cinnamon, odours, and frankincense* may signify the perfumings and censings used in churches, or the burning incense in imitation of the sweet incense under the law; and *ointments* may denote their chrism, or anointing with oil at baptism, imagining that Christ was anointed with material oil at his baptism, whereas it was with the holy Ghost: moreover, these things may be mystically understood, *cinnamon* being used by harlots in perfuming their bed, *Prov.* vii. 17. may intend the stews and brothel-houses erected at Rome, and licensed by authority, each whore paying so much per week; the revenues of which would sometimes yearly amount to twenty thousand ducats: *ointments* may be understood of chrism in baptism,

and extreme unction at death: *odours and frankincense* may mean their prayers and pater-nosters, their prayers for the dead, which were never made without the pence; hence that proverbial expression, no pence no pater-noster.

And wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep] Things for civil use; these are things which belong to food, to eating and drinking, and are the most material and necessary things of life, *Psalms* iv. 7. *Jer.* xxxi. 12. *Hosea* ii. 21, 22. *Gen.* ix. 3. *Isaiah* xxii. 13. Tyre had her merchants for these, *Ezek.* xxvii. 17, 18, 21. and Mr Brightman will have Italy to be Rome's merchant for wine and oil; Sardinia and Sicily her merchants for fine flour and wheat; Germany for beasts, and England for sheep: and with respect to the ecclesiastical use of these things, *wine* is for the chalice, used in daily masses, and drank only by the priests; *oil* for chrism at baptism, and for the extreme unction: *fine flour* for the mass, or make their breaden god of; and *wheat, beasts, and sheep* for tithes for the clergy.

And horses, and chariots, and slaves] Things for splendor, equipage, and attendance; *horses and chariots* for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops to ride in state and grandeur, and *slaves* to wait upon them. Tyre had her merchants for these, *Ezek.* xxvii. 14, 20. and Mr Brightman's opinion is, that the French are Rome's merchants for horses and chariots, and the Swifs for slaves, or bodies, as the word may be rendered, who live by exercising their bodies, and hiring them out in war; and who are many of them the guards of the person of the pope of Rome: and last of all it is added,

And souls of men] Still in allusion to the merchandise of Tyre, some of whose merchants are said to trade in the persons of men, *Ezek.* xxvii. 13. which the Targum and Septuagint render, "in the souls of men;" the popes have some of them sold their own souls to the devil, to get into the chair, and when in, have been the means of destroying of thousands of others; they assume a power over the souls of men, of binding and loosing the consciences of men, imposing new laws upon them, and freeing them from obligation to the laws of God and men, to the ruin of their souls; and it has been said by their sycophants, that if the pope should send thousands of men to hell, no one should say to him what dost thou? the Romish priests pretend to redeem souls out of purgatory for such a sum of money, and sell pardons and indulgencies, say mass, and promise heaven itself for money; and this they get at the expence of mens souls, by their false doctrine and superstitious worship, and so make merchandise of them,

(k) Mifn. Beracot, c. 6. §. 6.

them, as is said of the false teachers, 2 *Pet.* iii. 3. moreover, as by *slaves*, or bodies, in the preceding clause, are meant such who serve with their bodies, either by way of attendance, or in unnatural lust; so by *souls* of men may be meant men of soul, of great natural wit and understanding of great parts, abilities, and learning, with which they serve the man of sin, and his interest, such as Bellarmine, and others.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee] Or "the autumn of the desire of thy soul;" the desirable fruits which are then in season; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it *apples*, which are ripe in autumn; and may design all such fruit as Italy abounds with, which will now be destroyed; and seems to point at the time of year when Babylon's destruction will be: but in the mystical sense, these fruits may intend universal dominion over nations and churches, the obedience of kings and princes, riches, honours, and pleasures of all sorts; things greatly affected by the papacy, and of which a large harvest was expected, but now all will be at an end.

And all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee] All that were palatable to the taste, and pleasant to the sight, that were excellent and desirable; as the triple crown, cardinalships, archbishoprics, bishoprics, deaneries, fat benefices, and good livings.

And thou shalt find them no more at all] For this will be an utter destruction; at the reformation these desirable things were taken from her in several nations, and in some places she has recovered them again, as in Germany and other places; and the outward court, or the reformed church, sinking into an outward shew and form, will be wholly given to the Gentiles, the papists, and they will have these things in their hands again before Rome's utter destruction but after that they will no more be regained.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

The merchants of these things] Before-mentioned,

who have traded in them for themselves and for Rome.

Which were made rich by her] See *†*. 3.

Shall stand afar off for fear of her torment] As the kings of the earth before, *†*. 10. being conscious to themselves of their being partners in her crimes, and so might justly fear they should share in her punishment; and it may be, they will outwardly deny they are now of her religion, and will externally embrace the reformed religion; though they will be inwardly

Weeping and wailing] For the destruction of Rome, and the loss of their merchandize and goodly things.

16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

And saying, Alas, alas that great city] Using the same words the kings of the earth do, *†*. 10. only adding, suitable to their characters, as merchants, and the things they traded in with her.

That was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls] See the notes on *†*. 12. and on chapter xvii. 4. see also *Ezek.* xxvii. 32.

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

For in one hour so great riches is come to nought] That is, in a very short time, expressing the suddenness and speediness of Rome's destruction, the quick dispatch and expedition that will be made in it, by the instruments of it, as in *†*. 10. Rome was always famous for its great wealth and riches; the Jews have a saying (1), that if ten kabs of riches descend into the world, the ancient Romans take nine of them, and the other the whole world.

And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off] The lamentations of the kings and merchants of the earth being ended, masters of ships, sailors, and seafaring men begin theirs: by *ships* are meant dioceses, abbeys, priories, and monasteries; and by the *masters*, or governors of them, bishops, abbots, priors, the heads of monasteries, and

(1) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 2.

and of the several orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans, &c. and by *all the company in ships*, or *every shipmate*, the fellows that belong to every religious house and order; and by *sailors and traders at sea*, all such who compass sea and land to make profelytes to the Romish religion, like the pharisees of old, and who, as they, make them twofold more the children of hell than themselves; and in general, these traders abroad may design the pope's legates, sent by him into various parts, to collect his revenues, and the jesuits, who are every where sent abroad to sow sedition and false doctrine, and the priests that travel about to sell pardons and indulgencies: these *stood afar off*; as the kings and merchants before, for fear of sharing in the condemnation and punishment of Babylon; knowing full well that they deserved it, having been associates with her in her crimes.

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city?

And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning] See the note on *ψ. 9.*

Saying, What city is like unto this great city? As before for magnificence and grandeur, so now for sorrow, desolation, and ruin; nor was any city like it for power and authority, for pride and luxury, for idolatry and superstition, blasphemy and impenitence; the like the sailors say of Tyre, *Ezek. xxvii. 32.* from whence this, and other expressions are borrowed in this lamentation.

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

And they cast dust on their heads] As the seafaring men on account of Tyre, *Ezek. xxvii. 30.* this was a gesture used in mourning when persons were in afflicted and distressed circumstances, denoting disorder, confusion, and debasement; see *Jesh. vii. 6.* *Job ii. 12.*

And cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city] As in *ψ. 10, 16.* so it was once, though now in flames.

Wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea] Not only the merchants of the earth, as in *ψ. 3.* the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, but the governors of religious houses; these ac-

cumulated great wealth to themselves, and got the best of lands into their possession for the use and support of their abbeys and monasteries.

By reason of her costliness] Or costly things; pardons, indulgencies, absolution, saying mass, and praying souls out of purgatory, all which are costly, and hereby these traders have been enriched; and now the remembrance of these things, of which they will be deprived, will effect and grieve them, as well as the suddenness of Rome's ruin.

For in one hour is she made desolate] Her judgment come, and her riches come to nought, *ψ. 10, 17.*

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven] This is said by the voice from heaven, *ψ. 4.* which having called upon the saints to come out of Babylon, and to take vengeance on her, now calls upon all good men to rejoice at her ruin, whilst others were weeping and wailing; not at that simply considered, but as the justice of God is displayed therein: *heaven* may be literally understood, which sometimes is addressed when any thing of very considerable note and moment is done or spoken of, whether it be something exceeding bad, as in *Isaiah i. 2.* *Jer. ii. 12, 13.* or something exceeding great and good, as in *Psalms xcvi. 11—13.* or else the inhabitants of heaven, either the angels, who as they rejoice at the good and happiness of the saints, so at the confusion and destruction of their enemies; and the Syriac version reads, "heavens and angels;" or else the souls of men departed, particularly the souls under the altar, that have been long crying for vengeance on account of the shedding of their blood, *chap. vi. 9.* who may be made acquainted with Rome's destruction; or rather the true church of Christ upon earth, which in this book often goes by the name of heaven, in opposition to the apostate church, called the earth, because its members, doctrines, and ordinances are from heaven, and its happiness lies there.

And ye holy apostles and prophets] The Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, "and the saints, and the apostles, and prophets;" making three distinct sorts of persons of which heaven, or the church consists: by *saints* may be meant private members of churches, who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations; and by *apostles*, not the twelve apostles, or persons in such an office as they were, but

but ordinary ministers of the word, who are sent forth to preach the Gospel, and will be upon the spot at the destruction of Babylon, and will be such as shall have preached and defended the pure apostolic doctrine; and by *prophets* are intended not the prophets of the Old Testament, nor such under the New who had the gift of foretelling things to come, but such who have a gift of interpreting the scriptures and preaching the Gospel; the same with the two witnesses, who till this time will have prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now put it off, and put on the garments of praise and joy.

For God hath avenged you on her] Or “judged “your judgment on her;” that is, has executed righteous judgment on her, for all the evils done by her to the saints in ages past, the predecessors of the persons here mentioned, as well as to themselves: vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will avenge his elect sooner or later.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

And a mighty angel] Not Christ, nor one of the ministering spirits, but some man, or set of men, perhaps the same with him in *ch. i.*

Took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea] Just as Jeremiah took a stone and bound it to his book after he had read it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, as a sign and token of the destruction of old Babylon, *Jer. li. 63, 64. see Exod. xv. 5. Neh. ix. 11.*

Saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all] Which is expressive of the utter destruction of Rome, and of the violence, force, and power with which it will be destroyed, and of the suddenness and swiftness of its destruction, and of the irrecoverableness of its state and condition.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters] Which were for mirth, delight, and pleasure.

Shall be heard no more at all in thee] The words

seem to be taken from *Isaiah xxiv. 8. Ezek. xxvi. 13.* and may not only regard the loss of every thing that was delightful and pleasant to the ear in private houses, at festivals, and nuptials, and the like, but the ceasing of church music; there will be no more bells, nor organs, or any other instruments of music; no more chantors, and subchantors, choristers, singing-men and boys: and *no craftsman of whatsoever craft he be shall be found any more in thee*; which are very useful and necessary in cities and societies; it is threatened to Judah, that the cunning artificer should be taken from her, *Isaiah iii. 3.* and it is reckoned as a considerable part of the distress of the Babylonish captivity, that the carpenters and smiths were carried away from Jerusalem, *Jer. xxiv. 1.* and this judgment may fall on Rome for her worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, the works of mens hands, artificers and craftsmen, and who are employed in making other trinkets and wares for antichrist.

And the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee] To grind corn with, see *Jer. xxv. 10.* there will be a famine at the time that Rome is besieged, *ch. 8.* and after it is destroyed, there will be no corn to grind, nor inhabitants to eat it, and so no use of the mill-stone; this is said in opposition to her luxurious and delicious living, *ch. 3, 7, 9.* and this may also refer to feasts and rich entertainments, for which spices were ground and prepared by an hand-mill (*m*) in the house; and so may signify here that there would be no more of such entertainments and rich living; with which sense agrees what follows. This clause is wanting in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy forceries were all nations deceived.

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee] Either for common use, or at feasts, or at marriages, which being kept at night, required candles, lamps, or torches; this shews that Babylon, or Rome, shall be deprived of every thing, even of the least thing that is comfortable in life; see *Jer. xxv. 10.* this will be a just punishment upon her for her abuse of this blessing of life; so where wax candles in great numbers have been burning

burning in the day-time, there will not be so much as a single candle to give light in the night; and were candles have been lighted up for the dead, there will not be one for the use of the living.

And the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee] There will be no marrying, nor giving in marriage; no procreation of children, or propagation of posterity in this place; which denotes the utter extirpation of the inhabitants of it; the phrases are taken from *Jer.* vii. 34. and chapters xvi. 19. and xxv. 10, 11. and this will be in righteous retaliation for the prohibition of marriage, which God has instituted, and is honourable, *1 Tim.* iv. 2. the reasons of Babylon's destruction follow.

For thy merchants were the great men of the earth] In allusion to the merchants of Tyre, said to be princes, *Isaiah* xxiii. 8. for by trading and dealing in the wares and merchandise of Rome, persons of mean extract, and of very low circumstances of life, have grown exceeding rich, and have equalled the princes of the earth; as for instance, cardinal Woolsey here in England, a butcher's son at Ipswich; and on the other hand, the princes and great men of the earth have become Rome's merchants, and have thought it an high honour to get a cardinal's hat, as the cardinals Albertus duke of Austria, Bourbon, Pool, and others, mentioned by Brightman.

For thy sorceries were all nations deceived] Meaning her false doctrines, traditions, idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, with which, as another Jezebel, she has bewitched, allured, and deceived the nations of the empire, and the kings thereof, *ψ.* 3.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints] Such as before mentioned in *ψ.* 20. this is another reason of her destruction, besides her luxury and idolatry, namely, her shedding the blood of the saints, with which she is said to be drunk, and therefore blood is now given her to drink, chapters xvii. 6. and xvi. 6. for she will now be found guilty of slaying the witnesses, who are meant by the prophets and saints, that have been from the beginning of the apostacy.

And of all that were slain upon the earth] Not only of those that have been slain in the city of Rome, but of all those that have been slain throughout the empire; they being slain by her order, or with her consent, and she conniving at

it, encouraging it, and therefore will be justly chargeable with it all; see *Matt.* xxiii. 31, 32, 35. the Ethiopic version adds, "for the name of Christ."

C H A P. XIX.

This chapter contains the triumph of the saints over Babylon, and their thanksgiving to God because of his judgments on her; the marriage of Christ and his church, and a battle between him and his and her enemies, with the success of it. The congratulations are first of a promiscuous multitude in the church, ascribing salvation, praise, honour, glory, and power, to God, because of the righteousness of his judgments, and because of the perpetuity of them, *ψ.* 1—3. and then of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures, who worship God, assent to what had been before said, and join in praising the Lord, *ψ.* 4. and then another voice out of the throne is heard, calling upon all the servants of the Lord, and those that fear him, whether small or great, to praise our God, *ψ.* 5. after which is heard the voice of a great multitude, stirring up one to another to praise, because of the reign of the Lord God Almighty, and to rejoice and be glad because the time of the Lamb's marriage with his bride was come; who is described by her dress, the righteousness of the saints, comparable to fine linen, clean and white, *ψ.* 6—8. upon which an angel bids John write those persons happy who are invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and affirms these to be the true sayings of God; wherefore John, in a transport of joy, was just going to worship the angel, had he not been forbidden by him; from which he dissuades him, by observing that he was his fellow-servant, that God only is the object of worship, and that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, *ψ.* 9, 10. next follows a vision of a battle between Christ and his enemies; and first he, the general, is described, by the horse he sat upon, a white one; by the characters he bears, faithful and true; by what he did, judging and making war in righteousness; by his eyes, which were as a flame of fire; by his having many crowns on his head; by having a name, or names unknown, and particularly one, which is the word of God; by his habit, a vesture dipped in blood; by the armies he was at the head of, riding on white horses, and clothed in fine linen; by a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, with which he should utterly destroy the nations; and by having a name on his vesture and thigh, King of kings, and

and Lord of lords, *ch. 11—16.* upon which an angel is seen standing in the sun, and calling to all the fowls of the heaven to come to the supper of the great God, and to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and horsemen, of all ranks and degrees, *ch. 17, 18.* and next an account is given of the armies of the beast, and of the kings of the earth, that came to make war with the above warrior, *ch. 19.* the issue and success of which follow; the beast and false prophet are taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone; and the rest are killed by the sword of the above general, and the fowls have a feast of their flesh, *ch. 20, 21.*

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

And after these things] After the angel had declared the fall of Babylon, a voice from heaven had called the people of God out of her, and had ordered them to take vengeance on her; after the mournful lamentation of the kings, merchants, and seafaring-men; after another voice had called upon the saints to rejoice at her overthrow, and a mighty angel had described the manner of it, and had expressed her ruin in the strongest terms, with the reasons of it, John heard the songs of the righteous, as follow.

I heard a great voice of much people in heaven] Not literally taken, for these are not the innumerable company of angels, who are never called people; nor the spirits of just men made perfect, or the souls of departed saints, but men on earth; wherefore heaven designs the church, as in *chap. xviii. 20.* and frequently in this book; the people are the same with the 144000 seen with the Lamb on mount Zion, *chap. xiv. 1.* and with those on the sea of glass, who had got the victory over the beast, *chap. xv. 2.* and are no other than God's covenant-people, who are given to Christ, and made willing to be his in the day of his power; and though they are but a seed, a remnant, a small company, when compared with the world and carnal professors; yet are a large body of themselves, especially they will be at this time, when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fullness of the Gentiles will be brought in: and their voice on this occasion, the downfall of Rome, is said to be great; partly on account of their number, who will join together in acclamations of praise, and partly on account of

their great affection and vehemency of spirit, which will be raised hereby.

Saying, Alleluia] An Hebrew word, which signifies "praise ye the Lord." The Jews say (*n*), that the book of Psalms consists of ten sorts of songs, but Alleluia is the greatest of them, because it comprehends the name (*Jehovah*) and praise in one word: and it is observable that this word, which is often used in the Psalms, is first used when the psalmist desires the utter consumption and destruction of sinners and wicked men on earth, and is here taken up by the saints at the destruction of the man of sin and son of perdition; see *Psal. civ. 35.* and its being an Hebrew word, shows that at this time the Jews will be converted, and that Jews and Gentiles will become one church-state, and will worship and praise the Lord together; for the word is a call upon the saints to join together in solemn praise and thanksgiving; who is to be praised for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, both of nature and grace, and for his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; and this is to be done in concert.

Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God] Salvation, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is of God; *salvation* from antichristian power and tyranny, and from all enemies, and the everlasting salvation of the soul; and the *glory* of it belongs to all the three persons; they are glorious in themselves, and deserve all glory to be ascribed to them by man, and especially by the saints: *honour* is also their due; God the Father is to be honoured because he is the Father, and the Son is to be honoured as the Father is, and the holy Spirit is not to be grieved, but to be highly esteemed and valued, and equally with the other two persons: and *power* belongs to them all, and is seen in the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

For true and righteous are his judgments] As in chapters *xv. 3.* and *xvi. 7.* see the notes there: this is to be understood of God's judgments in general, and is a reason of the attribution of praise and glory to him; which may be said to be true, because being threatned, are now fulfilled; and

(n) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 1. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 117. 1.

to be *righteous*, because, according to the demerit of sin; and particularly God's judgments on antichrist are intended.

For he hath judged the great whore] Jezebel, Babylon, the Romish antichrist, before spoken of chap. xviii. 1. not only by passing a sentence of condemnation on her, but by executing it, putting it into the hearts of the kings to hate and burn her, and utterly destroy her; and which is judging right, since it follows:

Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication] Drew the kings and inhabitants of the Roman empire into wicked and idolatrous practices, and so corrupted and destroyed them in soul, body, and estate; see the note on chap. xi. 18. for this vision is cotemporary with the seventh trumpet.

And hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand] Shed by her, chapter xviii. 20, 24. and xvi. 6. and this being done in righteous judgment, is matter of joy and praise to the saints.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

And again they said, Alleluia] Or a *second time* they said it; they began and ended their solemn worship and service with it; so some psalms begin and end with this word, as *Psalm* cvi, cxiii, &c. and the repeating of the word shows how hearty, earnest, and constant they were in the work of praise on this account.

And her smoke rose up for ever and ever] They repeated their alleluia, or gave one spiritual huzzah more at the burning of Rome, and this followed: or the words may be rendered, "for her smoke rose," &c. and so are a reason for the second alleluia; it looks as if Rome, like another Sodom and Gomorrah, would sink into a sulphurous burning lake, and continue so: respect is had to the everlasting punishment of antichrist and his followers in hell, and to the everlasting burnings that will follow Rome's temporal destruction, which was an example and symbol of the vengeance of eternal fire; see chapter xiv. 11. so the Jews (*o*) say of the burning of Rome, that its fire shall not be quenched for ever, and that "its smoke shall rise up for ever."

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts] Mentioned in chap. iv. 4, 6. and who represent

the churches of Christ and ministers of the Gospel in the several periods of time, these join in the chorus, and praise the Lord on the account of the destruction of Rome, and ruin of antichrist; so they are often heard of in this book, when any remarkable thing is done, or when there is any breaking forth of the kingdom and glory of Christ; see chapters v. 8—10, 14. and vii. 11. and xi. 16, 17. and xiv. 3. and xv. 7. these

Fell down] On their faces before God, as in chapters iv. 10. and xi. 16. in great reverence of him, and of his righteous judgments.

And worshipped God that sat on the throne] Described in chap. iv. 2, 3. this refers to the public worship of God in the churches, by the ministers and members of them.

Saying, Amen; Alleluia] They said *Amen*, and signified their assent to what the much people in heaven had said, *ψ. 1—3.* and joined in the same Alleluia, or expressions of praise to God, for this great appearance of his in the downfall of Babylon. Both these words are used together in *Psalm* cvi. 48. see chap. v. 14.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

And a voice came out of the throne] Not from God the Father, that sat upon it, for the phrase, *praise our God*, could not be said by him with propriety and pertinence; but rather from Christ, the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, who as mediator could say of him to his people, my God, and your God, and my Father, and your Father, *John* xx. 17. though it seems best to understand it of the voice of one of the angels about the throne, since one of these is afterwards spoken of, whom John would have worshipped, but was forbid, *ψ. 9, 10.* and which may design either one of the ministering spirits, or a preacher of the Gospel, and a set of such, calling upon the saints to the discharge of their duty, or to return to it on this occasion.

Saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants] Meaning not the ministers of the Gospel only, who serve in the Gospel of Christ, by preaching and defending it, and in the administration of Gospel ordinances to the comfort of the saints, but all the people of God; for though they are sons, and no more servants to sin and Satan, and the world, yet they are servants of God, and of righteousness, and serve him willingly and cheerfully in a way of duty, and without slavish fear, and with a godly one, and from principles of love and gratitude, and without mercenary views, and selfish ends; and these are called upon, as a part of their

service, to say alleluia, or to sing the praises of God for his judgments on antichrist; see *Psalms* cxxxiv. 1. and chap. cxxxv. 1, 2.

And ye that fear him, both small and great] Who fear the Lord, not with a servile, but filial fear, with the new covenant grace of fear, which springs from, and is increased by the goodness and grace of God; whether greater or lesser believers, fathers, young men, or children; whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever nation, kindred, or people; see *Psalms* cxv. 13. *Rev.* xi. 18.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude] Even of all the servants of the Lord, and them that fear him, small and great; a vast multitude of converted Jews and Gentiles, in the several parts of the world, who in answer to the voice out of the throne, which came with great power and energy, lift up their voices in praise to God, both for their own conversion, and for the downfall of Babylon.

And as the voice of many waters] Falling down in a descent, or in rough and rocky places, which make a great noise, and is heard afar off; and such must be the united voice of so great a multitude of converts, as will be gathered together every where at this time: the same metaphor is used of the voice of Christ in chap. i. 15.

And as the voice of mighty thunderings] Violent claps of it, which are sometimes so loud, that they rend the very heavens, and strike the inhabitants of the earth with the utmost consternation: these are the same voices which will be heard in the church, when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, chap. xi. 15.

Saying, Alleluia] Or praise ye the Lord; they will call upon one another to celebrate the praises of God, on account of the above things, in the same manner, and using the same word, the people in heaven, and the four and twenty elders, and four living creatures do; and this is the fourth time the word is used in this context, and confirms the observation that has been made, that this vision refers to the conversion of the Jews, which will quickly follow the destruction of Rome: and the Jews themselves have a notion, that when Rome is destroyed, the Messiah will come; and so he will in his spiritual reign. They

say (o), "our redemption will be immediately upon the destruction of Rome." And again (p), "the root of our redemption depends upon the destruction of Rome." The reason for their saying alleluia follows,

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth] By whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and God over all, blessed for ever, and is the almighty; and though he was set up as king over the holy hill of Zion, and has reigned over the church in every age, and came as king into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, and at his resurrection was declared Lord and Christ, and his kingdom was then more manifest, and he has ever since displayed his kingly power in defending his church, and defeating the enemies of it; yet now will he reign more visibly and gloriously, his kingdom will be enlarged from one end of the earth to the other, and he will be king over all the earth, which will occasion great joy to Jews and Gentiles; see *Psalms* xlvii. 1, 2. and xcvi. 1. and the note on *Rev.* xi. 17.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him] The saints particularly; the converted Jews will call upon one another to express their gladness at the glorious display of Christ's kingly power and authority, and at the destruction of his enemies, and the happy and comfortable state of his church and people; and to rejoice in him as the Lord their righteousness and strength, and to give him the honour and glory of salvation, and to return him thanks for all the benefits they shall have received from him, particularly on account of what follows.

For the marriage of the Lamb is come] That is, of Christ, the Son of God, with the Jewish church more especially; there was a secret betrothing of all the elect of Christ before the world began; and there is an open espousal of every individual of them at conversion; but the public and general solemnization of the nuptials, will not be until the new Jerusalem church-state takes place in the personal reign of Christ, hereafter mentioned, chap. xxi. 1, 2, 9. but here, and as previous to that, there will be a very general and open marriage of Christ with the people of the Jews, who have long rejected and forsaken him; for if the conversion of a single person may be called

(o) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 1.

(p) Ibid. fol. 163. 4.

called a marriage with Christ, much more the conversion of such numbers; and which is often prophesied of under this metaphor of a marriage, as in *Isaiah* lxii. 4, 5. *Hosea* ii. 19. And now the time will be come for the accomplishment of it, the evidence of which follows:

And his wife hath made herself ready] Or “dressed herself;” by decking herself with jewels, and putting on her wedding-garment, provided for her, and given to her by her husband the Lamb, as appears from the next verse; this preparation will lie partly in the number of converts that will be brought into the Jewish church, which she will receive and clothe herself with, as with the ornament of a bride, *Isaiah* xlix. 18. and partly by the exercise of the several graces of the Spirit upon Christ, comparable to the jewels of a bride, with which she will be adorned for her husband; and also by putting on the robe of his righteousness, hereafter mentioned, which the old Jewish synagogue rejected, and therefore was cast off, *Rom.* x. 3. *Matt.* xxii. 12, 13. The Arabic version reads, “the marriage of the Lamb is now come with his spouse, prepared for him;” and the Ethiopic version, “the marriage of his Lamb is come, and the wife is prepared;” and that her preparation is not by her own merits, and works of righteousness, but by the grace of her husband, is clear from the following verse. Mr Daubuz, by *the marriage of the Lamb*, understands the first resurrection, and the state of the church at that time; and by *the fine linen*, the dress of the church next mentioned, the incorruptible body of the saints compared to a garment, *1 Cor.* xv. 53. *2 Cor.* v. 2—4. and by those, who are afterwards said to be called to the marriage, the converted nations in a mortal state: but all the saints will share in the first resurrection; besides, as yet, the beast and false prophet are not destroyed, which must be before the first resurrection, as the following vision shows.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen] Or *Byssine*: the *Byssus* of which fine linen is made, is said to grow on a tree, in height like to a poplar, and its leaves like a willow, and to be brought out of Judea into Egypt, which the Egyptians used in most of their holy things (q). A dress neat and modest, and not like the attire

of the whore of Rome, chap. xvii. 4. and this is said to be

Clean and white] And is interpreted in the next clause.

For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints] Or *righteousnesses*; not good works, or their own righteousness; for though these are evidences of faith, by which the saints are justified, and are what God has prepared for them, that they should walk in them; yet these are not comparable to fine linen, clean and white, but are like filthy rags, and cannot justify in the sight of God; but the righteousness of Christ is meant, and justification by that; for that is the only justifying righteousness of the saints: and though it is but one, yet it may be called *righteousnesses*, or *justifications* in the plural number; partly because of the several seasons in which the act of justification passes, first in God’s mind from eternity, next on Christ as the surety, when he rose from the dead, and on all the elect in him, and then in the consciences of the saints when they believe, and the sentence of it will be notified and declared to men and angels at the last judgment; and partly because of the many persons that are justified by it, as also because of the excellency of it; so the Jews use the word in the plural number: the Targumist on *Zech.* iii. 4. paraphrases the text, “I will clothe thee, *וכך*, with righteousnesses (r);” upon which words Jarchi has this note, “change of beautiful garments is all one as if it had been said, *וכך*, righteousnesses; and because sin is like to filthy garments, righteousness is like to garments beautiful and white.” Christ’s righteousness may be compared to fine linen, clean and white, because of its spotless purity; those that are arrayed with it being unblameable and irreproveable, and without spot and blemish, and without fault before the throne; with this the Jewish church will be clothed; all the Lord’s people will be righteous, they will have on the best robe, and wedding-garment, which was despised by the Jews in Christ’s time, who refused to come to the marriage-feast; and their being arrayed with it will be owing to the grace of Christ, who grants it; and so Christ’s righteousness is called the gift of righteousness, the free gift, and gift by grace, and abundance of grace; and faith which receives it, and puts it on, is the gift of God, *Rom.* v. 15—17. *Eph.* ii. 8. Not only the garment is a gift of grace, but the putting of it on is a grant from Christ, and what he himself does, *Isaiah* lxi. 10. *Zech.* iii. 4.

9 And

(q) Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 2. c. 9. Vid. Apul. Apolog. p. 225. Pausan. l. 5. five Eliac. p. 294.

(r) See *Isaiah* lxi. 10. & Targum in *Hosai* x. 12.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

And he saith unto me, Write] What follows, because of the importance of it, and to shew the certainty of it, and that it may be regarded and remembered: the person speaking is either the voice from the throne, *v.* 5. or the angel that attended John all along, and shewed him this revelation, chap. i. 1. or the angel that proposed to show him the judgment of the great whore, chapter xvii. 1.

Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb] By which is meant the Gospel ministry and ordinances, and communion in them, to which the Jews will be called to partake of in the latter day; these at the first of the Gospel dispensation are called a dinner, to which the Jews were invited, but refused to come, and now a supper, because made in the evening of that dispensation; to which being called with an effectual calling, they will come, and partake of it; on which account they are pronounced blessed, being the bride, the Lamb's wife, having on his righteousness, partaking of his benefits, and being called unto, and made meet for eternal glory and happiness; or else these may design converted Gentiles, who will be invited to join with them, and will.

And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God] The Syriac version reads, "these my true words are of God;" being true, it is plain they are of God, and being of God, it is certain they are true; for he is the God of truth, and cannot lie, and therefore may be depended upon.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

And I fell at his feet to worship him] Being transported with the news he brought him of the marriage, or conversion of his countrymen the Jews, and struck with reverence and awe of the glory and majesty in which the angel appeared to him; and forgetting himself, that worship was only due to God, he behaved in this manner; which is not to be excused nor justified, as appears from the angel's words.

And he said unto me, See thou do it not] The words are in the original very short and concise,

and are spoken in an abrupt manner, and in great haste; as fearing he would be guilty of idolatry, before he could speak all his mind, and use the arguments that were necessary to dissuade from it.

I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus] If this was one of the ministering spirits, he was a servant of the same Lord as John; and if he was a minister of the Gospel, he was still more literally a fellow-servant of his, and of the apostles, and preachers of the Gospel; which is meant by the testimony of Jesus, that bearing testimony to the person, office, grace, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the glory following; and therefore being but a servant, and a servant in common with John and his brethren, was by no means to be worshipped; not the servant, but master; not the creature, but the Creator.

Worship God] And him only, even God the Father, Son, and Spirit; not the Father to the exclusion of the Son, the first-born whom all the angels are called upon to worship; nor of the Spirit, who is equally joined with the Father and Son in baptism, a part of religious worship, and in other parts of it also; but this excludes all creatures, angels and men, things animate or inanimate, and images of them; the worshipping of which will now be no more, or at least will be quickly at an end.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy] That is, the testimony of Jesus, or the Gospel which John and his brethren had, is the very spirit, life, and soul of the prophecy of this book; for as all the prophets bore witness to Christ, so does the Spirit of God in this; or the testimony which they had, and bore to Christ, was equal to the spirit of prophecy with which this angel was endowed; so that he and they were upon an equal foot; and he was no more a proper object of divine and religious adoration, than they were. Of the phrase *the spirit of prophecy*, see the Targum of *Psalms* lxxviii. 33.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

And I saw heaven opened] This vision refers not to the same time the first seal does, chapter vi. 2. for though a white horse, with a rider on it, is seen here, as there; that respects the first times of the Gospel, this the latter part of the dispensation of it; nor to the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and their angels, chap. xii. 7.

xiii. 7. that issued in the downfal of paganism in the Roman empire, this will issue in the downfal of the papacy in it; nor to the personal coming of Christ to the last judgment, of which an account is given in the following chapter; but to the battle at Armageddon, to which the sixth vial is a preparation, and which is finished under the seventh, chap. xvi. 13, 14, 16, 17. and what is briefly hinted at there, is at large related here; in which Christ, the general, and his armies, on the one hand, and the kings of the earth, with the beast and false prophet, and their armies, on the other hand, appear to give battle to each other: and the issue of the battle is particularly represented, in order to have a view of which, John *saw heaven opened*; not literally, as at Christ's baptism, and at the stoning of Stephen, nor in a spiritual sense, by the blood of Christ, but visionally, as in chap. iv. 1. and since heaven, often in this book, signifies the church on earth, a more glorious and comfortable state of the church may be designed; when her gates shall be opened continually, and not shut day nor night, to receive the forces of the Gentiles, and their kings, *Isaiab lx. 15.* such a state as is referred to in chapters xi. 19. and xv. 5. to which visions this is contemporary; and it may denote a very glorious appearing of Christ, not in person, which will be after this, but in his kingdom and power, in defeating his enemies, and reigning spiritually with his saints; and it may also design the clear revelation and discerning John had of the following things.

And behold a white horse] Which, as in chapter vi. 2. may be a symbol of the Gospel, and Gospel ministers, as there, in the former, here in the latter part of the Gospel dispensation; signified by a horse, to denote the swift progress of the Gospel in the latter day, the majesty, power, and authority with which it will come, bearing down all opposition made against it; and by a *white horse*, to express the purity of the Gospel, and of its preachers and professors, and the peace it publishes, and gives, and the joy it brings, and the triumphs that will attend it.

And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True] That Christ is here meant, is evident from the description of his eyes, *v. 12.* being the same as in chapter i. 14. and from his name, *v. 13.* which is the peculiar name of the Son of God, *John i. 1, 14.* and he sits upon, and is bore by, and rides forth in the Gospel, and the ministry of it, with glory and majesty, and prosperously, *Psalms xlv. 3, 4.* and the characters of *faithful and true*, well agree with him; see chapter iii. 7, 14. and the notes there. He is *faithful and true* to

God, who appointed him a leader and commander of the people, and to them he is the commander of: and these characters well suit him now, when he will accomplish all the glorious things spoken of the church, relating to her spiritual and happy state in the latter day, and serve greatly to recommend him as a general.

And in righteousness he doth judge and make war] Which is to be understood not of the last judgment, though that will be executed in righteousness, and therefore is called the righteous judgment, yet in that day there will be no war, no opposition, the wicked will at once submit; but of Christ's judging of his people, and avenging their blood on their enemies, and the remainder of them among papists, pagans, and Mahometans; who will be gathered together at Armageddon in battle array against them, when there will be an utter discomfiture of them in righteous judgment; for as in times past the beast made war with the saints and witnesses, and overcame them, Christ will enable his people to make war with him and his accomplices, and overcome them; as the sequel of this vision shows, Christ being at the head of them, though not in person, yet in power.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

His eyes were as a flame of fire] Which denotes the perspicuity and penetration of them, the omniscience of Christ to look into, and discover the secret machinations, schemes, and devices of his enemies against his people, and his exercise of it in favour of them, his eyes, like a flame of fire, running to and fro on their behalf; and also this may signify the fierceness of his anger against the enemies of his people, the eyes of his glory being provoked by their cruelty and wickedness; and likewise the suddenness of their destruction, and the inevitableness of it.

And on his head were many crowns] For he has not only a crown, as the creator and governor of the universe, in right of nature, but he has one which his Father has put upon his head, when he set him as king over his holy hill of Zion, *Psalms xxi. 3.* and there is another, which his mother, the church, crowned him with in the day of his espousals, *Cant. iii. 11.* and besides these, every believer puts a crown on his head, gives him the glory of their salvation, and all of them cast their crowns at his feet: to which may be added, that the crowns of all the kings of the earth are his; they reign by him, and are accountable to him.

This

This part of the description may be expressive of all that power in heaven and earth, given to Christ at his resurrection, and exercised by him ever since; and particularly of the extensiveness of his kingdom at the time this vision refers to, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his, chapter xi. 15. for this vision, and the seventh trumpet, are cotemporary; and it may be a symbol of the many victories obtained by him, and of the last and closing one that should now be obtained by him.

And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself] Which seems to be his name, the Son of God, as the unknown name of the overcomer, in chap. ii. 17. is a child of God; and the sense is, that his divine nature, in which he is the Son of God, is incomprehensible, and that the begetting or generation of him, as such, is ineffable, *Prov. xxx. 4.* and that without a divine revelation the name itself could not be known; or it could not be known that God had a Son, and that Christ is he, and bears that name, *Matt. xi. 27.* and chapter xvi. 16, 17. or else his name *Immanuel*. The incarnate God may be intended, which is a secret and wonderful name, and contains in it, without controversy, a great mystery, which cannot be comprehended by finite minds; or his name, *עֲלֵינוּ*, wonderful, secret, *Isaiah ix. 6.* and *Judges xiii. 18.* This name is said to be *written*; that is, in the scriptures of truth, in which it is revealed that Christ is the Son of God, and *Immanuel*. In *ψ. 16.* the name of King of kings, &c. is said to be written on his vesture, and on his thigh; and the Ethiopic version makes this to be written on his crown or diadem, reading the words thus; "and upon his head a crown, and there was written in his diadem a name, and no man knew it; but he himself only;" as the high priest had *holiness to the Lord* written on his mitre. The Syriac version inserts a clause between the two last, "having names written," and then follows, "and a name written," &c. and so the Complutensian edition.

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood] Either in his own, by which he became the saviour of his church and people; or else in the blood of his saints, he now comes to avenge; or rather in the blood of his enemies, with which he appears as stained, before the battle is fought, the victory being sure, and their slaughter unavoidable: the metaphor is taken from persons treading in a wine-press, whose garments are stained with blood

of grapes; see *ψ. 15.* *Gen. xlix. 11.* and *Isaiah lxiii. 1—3.* Here may be also an allusion to the Roman general's vesture, which was sometimes purple or scarlet, in which he fought, as did Lucullus (s).

And his name is called The Word of God] The name of Christ, often used by John in his Gospel, epistles, and in this book; *John i. 1, 14.* *1 John i. 1.* and chap. v. 7. *Rev. i. 2, 9.* Of the signification, reason, and import of this name, see the note on *John i. 1.* The reason why he is called by it here, may be partly to express his greatness, glory, and majesty, this being a name which principally belongs to him, as a divine person, as the creator of all things, and as previous to his incarnation; and partly because all the promises of God in his word, and which are all *yea* and *amen* in Christ, will be now shortly fulfilled.

14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

And the armies which were in heaven] Not the angels, though they are God's host, and are the armies of the heavens; they are in heaven, and dwell there, and follow Christ, attend upon him, and minister to him, and have been sometimes represented by horses and horsemen, *2 Kings ii. 11.* and chap. vi. 17. *Zeib. i. 8.* and they are pure and holy creatures, and will come with Christ to judgment: but this vision refers not to the day of judgment; and besides, the saints are meant, as appears by their habit, for the fine linen, white and clean, is the righteousness of the saints, *ψ. 8.* and the righteousness of angels and saints is not the same. Moreover, these are the same company described in chapter xvii. 14. The saints are in a state of warfare, have many enemies to fight with, sin, Satan, and the world; they are enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the captain of salvation; they are provided with the whole armour of God, and are very numerous, and always more than conquerors through Christ: these are described by the place where they were, *in heaven*; not being glorified saints in heaven; with these indeed Christ will come to judgment, even with all his saints with him; but members of the church militant, said to be in heaven, because that is often called the kingdom of heaven; and because their names are written in heaven, and they are of heavenly extract; they are born from above, and are partakers of the heavenly calling; they

(s) Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Diet. l. 1. c. 20.

they belong to heaven, they are citizens of it, and are pressing on to it. And these

Followed him] Christ, their leader and commander in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; having gone on in his ways thro' a train of sufferings, and cleaved unto him, and now attend him; not to assist in fighting, but to add to the glorious and triumphant appearance of their general; and therefore are said to be

Upon white horses] They had served Christ in his Gospel, which some of them had preached, and all professed, and had maintained the purity of it in doctrine and practice, and now triumphed in Christ, and along with him, riding upon horses of the same colour with his, as being his princes and nobles, and whom he had made kings as well as priests; the former may be signified by their horses; see *Judges* v. 10. and the latter by their following habit,

Clothed in fine linen, white and clean] Not the horses, but the armies on them; which designs not their inward purity, which was very glorious; nor their outward conversation-garments, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; but the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is pure and spotless: these have no armour on, for they are not to strike a blow, only their general, who has the bloody garment on, is to tread the wine-press, and destroy antichrist with the breath of his mouth, or with his sword proceeding out of it, as follows.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword] The Complutensian edition, and all the Oriental versions, with the Vulgate Latin, read, "a sharp two-edged sword." The word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it, and which he will fully execute, to the utter destruction of all his enemies; see the note on chapter i. 16.

That with it he should smite the nations] The Gentiles, the papists, the antichristian states, those that have adhered to Babylon, and have drunk of the wine of her fornication. This is predicted in *Numb.* xxiv. 17—19. and on account of this the nations will be angry under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vision is cotemporary, chap. xi. 18.

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron] Use them with the utmost severity: the phrase is taken out of *Psalms* ii. 9. a prophecy of Christ, and mentioned twice before in this book, chapters ii. 27. and xii. 5. see the notes there.

And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God] The fierce wrath of God against sinners is compared to a wine-press; and the wicked antichristian party are likened to clusters of grapes; who being ripe for destruction, are cast into it, and pressed, squeezed, and trodden down by the mighty power of Christ, the Word of God, whose vesture is therefore before said to be dipped in blood; the same metaphor is used in chap. xiv. 19, 20. the allusion seems to be to *Isaiah* lxiii. 3, 6.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written] This name, afterwards expressed, is said to be written on his vesture, in allusion to the custom of persons of note and eminence, having their names interwoven in their garments, and which was sometimes done in letters of gold, as Zeuxis had (1); and it is expressive of the conspicuousness of Christ's kingdom, which now will come with observation; his judgments, the administrations of his kingly office will be manifest, and he will reign before his ancients gloriously: and its being said to be written on his thigh, may mean either that it was upon that part of his garment which covered his thigh; or else that it was also on his sword, which he sometimes girt upon his thigh. Mr Daubuz has given an instance out of Victor Vitenis, of Clementianus, a monk, who had written on his thigh, "a *manichee* disciple of Jesus Christ." And this being done in Africa, he supposes it to be a Phœnician custom continued. It may here denote the perpetuity of Christ's name, power, and dominion, which will continue to the latest posterity, *Psalms* lxxii. 17. which spring from the thigh; and it may denote the subjection of his people to him, signified by the putting the hand under the thigh, *Gen.* xxiv. 2. And this name is

King of kings, and Lord of lords] Which will well suit him now when he shall be openly king over all the earth; see the note on chapter xvii. 14.

17 And

(1) *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 35. c. 9.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

And I saw an angel standing in the sun] By whom is meant, not the angel of the fourth vial, who poured it on the sun, taken in another sense than here, and therefore could not stand in it; nor the archangel with the last trumpet, for as yet the dead rise not, nor does the judgment come on; nor one of the ministering spirits; nor Christ himself, for he is the great God, to whose supper this angel invites, but a minister of the Gospel; or rather a set of Gospel ministers, such as in chapter xiv. who may be said to stand in the sun, in like manner as the woman, the church, was seen clothed with it, chapter xii. 1. and may denote the conspicuousness of Gospel preachers; for as the church now will be established upon the top of the mountains, so her teachers shall not be removed into corners any more, but her eyes shall behold her teachers; and also the clear sight they shall have of the doctrines and mysteries of the Gospel, who shall now see eye to eye; and particularly the further breakings forth of the glory of the latter day, and the ensuing victory of Christ over all his enemies; and also shews the great strength of their fight, who, far from being like moles and bats, will be able both to look upon the sun, and to stand in it: and it may likewise signify the glory and majesty of Christ's kingdom; the comfortable influence of him, the sun of righteousness, who will now arise upon his people with healing in his wings; and the steadfastness of Christ's ministers to him, and his pure Gospel, and the glorious truths of it.

And he cried with a loud voice] That he might be heard far and near, having something of moment and importance to publish.

Saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven] Meaning not the barbarous nations, the Goths, and Vandals, and Saracens, which overrun and destroyed the western and eastern empires; these times are too late for them, they rose up under the six first trumpets; nor devils and unclean spirits, which will prey upon and torment antichrist, and his followers, in hell; nor military and avaricious men among protestants, but christian princes, and their people, are designed; they are such as are in heaven, the church, and of note there, who will share the spoils of the antichristian people, and possess their kingdoms, substance, and estates: these are invited by the angel, saying,

Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God] The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "to the great supper of God;" and so the Complutensian edition; not the Lord's supper, where not the flesh of men, but the flesh of Christ is eat by faith; nor the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will be of another kind than this; nor is any spiritual repast intended, such as living by faith on Christ, and supping with him, being entertained with his promises, presence and the discoveries of his love; but the slaughter of Christ's enemies, and his victory over them, which is his sacrifice; and these are the guests he bids; see *Zeph. i. 7.* and whom he calls to share in the conquests and spoils, and to express their joy on this occasion: *the great God*, is no other than Christ the general of the armies in heaven, called before the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of Lords; who will gain this victory, and will be known to be the great God by the judgment he will execute. This is a proof of our Lord's divinity; see *Titus ii. 13.*

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

That ye may eat the flesh of kings] Of the earth, and of the whole world, who will fall in the battle at Armageddon; see chapters xvi. 14. and xix. 19. and design either those antichristian kings and states, which have drunk of the wine of Rome's fornication, and will bewail the downfall of Babylon, chapter xviii. 3, 9. or those pagan kings which will be drawn in by the Pope and Turk, to aid and assist in this war, or both, when, upon the defeat of them, the christian princes will seize upon, possess and enjoy their kingdoms and dominions, which is meant by eating their flesh; see the note on chapter xvii. 16.

And the flesh of captains] Of their generals, and officers under them.

And the flesh of mighty men] The common soldiers, who are so called, *Jer. xlvi. 5.* who will be rifled and plundered.

And the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them] Whose rich trappings and clothes will be taken away from them.

And the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great] That is, the substance of all the inhabitants of the antichristian empire, both eastern and western, of whatsoever rank, state, and

and condition they be; chapter xiii. 16. The metaphors are taken from, and there is a manifest allusion to *Ezek. xxxix. 17—20.* and the whole denotes the entire slaughter, and utter ruin of the whole antichristian army, and the certainty of Christ's victory over it before hand; and also the destruction of all that are the followers of antichrist, throughout his dominions, which will now wholly fall into the hands of the saints, and be enjoyed by them.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

And I saw the beast] Not the devil, for after this he is taken and bound for a thousand years, and then loosed, and laid hold on again, and cast into the lake of fire; not but that this war will be by his instigation, and under his influence, chapter xvi. 14. not the Roman pagan empire, which has been destroyed long ago, under the sixth seal, and was the issue of the battle between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; but the antichristian civil powers, or antichrist in his civil capacity; and which, though it may chiefly regard the western antichrist, and the remains of the Latin idolatry, yet may take in the eastern antichrist, or the Mahometan powers, which may all join together in this battle; the beast will survive for a while the downfall of his seat, Babylon or Rome.

And the kings of the earth] These, as they stand distinguished from the beast, or the antichristian kings, and civil states, may design as many of the pagan kings and princes, as the Pope and Turk by their emissaries can persuade to assist them in this war; see the note on chapter xvi. 14.

And their armies gathered together] At Armageddon, or in the valley of Jehoshaphat, chapter xvi. 16. *Joel iii. 2, 12.*

To make war against him that sat on the horse] "The white horse," *ψ. 11.* as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, which must be downright folly and madness, since he is the Word of God, the great God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And against his army] Ver. 14. who, though unarmed, and only clothed in fine linen, have nothing to fear, since Christ, the captain of their salvation, is at the head of them.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought mira-
Vol. V.

cles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the beast was taken] At the first onset, as soon as ever the battle begun, and carried away captive, as it was threatened he should, chapter xiii. 10. and this by Christ, who will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, *2 Thess. ii. 8.*

And with him the false prophet] That is, the second beast in chapter xiii. 11—14. as appears by the characters by which he is here described, or antichrist in his ecclesiastic capacity; that is, the pope with his clergy: and indeed, when the antichristian princes and states are taken and destroyed, which are the support of the papacy, that must in consequence sink, be crushed and ruined; the Alexandrian copy reads, "and they that are with him, the false prophet Jezebel;" the false prophets and her children, who will now be killed with death, chap. ii. 20, 23.

That wrought miracles before him] The beast, or the civil antichristian powers, even signs and lying wonders, which were approved of, and applauded by him, by which, believing them, he was confirmed in antichristian principles.

With which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image] The several subjects of the antichristian states; see chapter xiii. 14—17. but none of God's elect, who cannot be seduced by such means, *Matt. xxiv. 24.*

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone] Which is the second death, chapter xxi. 8. The severe punishment of antichrist, considered in both his capacities, civil and ecclesiastic, is expressed by being cast into a lake of fire, not material fire, but the wrath of God, which will be poured out like fire, and will be intolerable; and by this lake, burning with brimstone, which giving a nauseous stench, aggravates the punishment. Says R. Joden (*1*), when a man smells the smell of brimstone, why does his breath draw back at it (or catch)? because he knows he shall be judged with it in the world to come. The allusion seems to be to the place where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which is become a sulphurous lake, and is an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude 8.* and these two
are

(1) Bereshit Rabba, 5. 57. fol. 45. 4.

are said to be *cast alive* into it, which shews, that they will not only suffer a corporal death at this battle, and in the issue of it, but will be destroyed, body and soul, in hell: the phrase denotes the awfulness, inevitableness, and severity of their punishment; there seems to be some reference to the earth's swallowing up Korah, and his company alive, *Num. xi. 33.* see *Dan. vii. 11.*

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

And the remnant were slain] Not only the kings of the earth, and their armies, that will now be gathered together, but all the remains of Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans, in the several parts of the world, even all the enemies of Christ: these will be slain

With the sword of him that sat upon the horse] "Upon the white horse," as the Ethiopic version reads; the Arabic version reads, "that sat upon the throne."

Which sword proceeded out of his mouth] Ver. 15. and is the word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it; and the meaning is, either that these shall be subdued, conquered, and converted by the word; and so are fitly called a *remnant*, a remnant according to the election of grace among the antichristian party; and which sense agrees with chapter xi. 13. or else, that they will be convicted and confounded, and not be able to stand against the light and evidence of the word of God, and will be sentenced by Christ to everlasting punishment; and it may be partly one, and partly the other.

And all the fowls were filled with their flesh] All the christian princes and people will be satisfied with their kingdoms, riches and wealth, and will rejoice at their destruction, and in the righteousness of God, which will be displayed in it: and now the world being clear of all Christ's enemies, pagan, papal, and Mahometan, the way will be prepared for Christ's open and glorious kingdom in it.

CHAP. XX.

This chapter contains the binding of Satan, the saints thousand years reign with Christ, the loosing of Satan again, the destruction of him, and the Gog and Magog army, and the last judgment: the angel that is to bind Satan is described by his descent from heaven; by his

having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and by the use he made of them, laying hold on Satan, binding him, casting him into the bottomless pit, and then shutting it up, and setting a seal on him; by all which he will be prevented from deceiving the nations for the space of a thousand years, *℣. 1—3.* After this thrones are seen, with persons on them, on whom judgment is given; who are said to be such as had been martyrs for Jesus, and had not worshipped the beast, or professed his religion; whose happiness is represented by living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, when others will not; the second death will have no power on them; they will be the priests of God, and Christ, and reign with him during the said term, having a part in the first resurrection, *℣. 4—6.* At the expiration of which term Satan will be loosed, and go out of prison, deceive the nations, and gather Gog and Magog to battle; who being exceeding numerous, will cover the breadth of the earth, encompass the camp and city of the saints, when fire will come down from heaven and destroy them, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet are, and be tormented for ever and ever, *℣. 7—10.* And next an account is given of the general judgment; and the judge is described by the throne he sat on, a white cloud, and by his majesty, which is such, that the heavens and the earth flee from before him, *℣. 11.* And next the persons judged are described by their common state, the dead; by their age or condition, great and small, and by their position, standing before God; and then an account of the procedure, or rule of judgment; the books are opened, and the execution of judgment according to what is found in the books, *℣. 12.* in order to which the sea, death, and the grave give up the dead in them, and the two last are cast into the lake, and with them those who are not in the book of life, *℣. 13, 14.*

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven] All Christ's enemies, and Satan's instruments being removed, the devil is left alone, and only stands in the way of Christ's kingdom; and what will be done to him, and how he will be in the issue disposed of, this vision gives an account: by the angel, John saw; is not to be understood Constantine

tine the great; for though he is the man-child that was taken up to God, and his throne, being advanced to the empire, yet he cannot, with that propriety, be said to come down from heaven; and though he vanquished the heathen emperors, in which the dragon presided, and cast paganism out of the empire, by which the devil ruled in it, yet the binding of Satan is another kind of work, and seems too great for him; and besides, did not take place in his time, as will be seen hereafter: nor is an apostle, or a minister of the Gospel intended; such are indeed called angels in this book, and may be said to come down from heaven, because they have their commission from thence; and particularly the apostles had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but not the key of the bottomless pit: and a chain and system of Gospel truths, which they made good use of for the establishing of Christ's kingdom, and weakening of Satan's, but not such a chain as is here meant; and they had the power of binding and loosing, or of declaring things lawful or unlawful, but not of binding and loosing of Satan; nor was he bound in the apostolic age: nor is one of the ministering spirits, or a deputation of angels designed; for though Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and will make use of them, both to gather together his elect, and to cast the wicked into the lake of fire, yet not to bind Satan; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself is this angel, who is the angel of God's presence, and of the covenant; and who is in this book called an angel, chapters vii. 2. and x. 1. to whom all the characters here well agree, and to whom the work of binding Satan most properly belongs; for who so fit to do it, or so capable of it, as the seed of the woman, that has bruised the serpent's head, or as the Son of God, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, yea to destroy him himself; and who dispossessed multitudes of devils from the bodies of men, and is the strong man armed that dislodges Satan from the souls of men, and is the same with Michael, who drove him from heaven, and cast him out from thence before, chapter xii. 7, 8. And his coming down from heaven is not to be understood of his incarnation, or of his coming from thence by the assumption of human nature; for Satan was not bound by him then, as will be seen hereafter; but of his second coming, which will be from heaven, where he now is, and will be local, visible, and personal: of no other coming of his does this book speak, as seen by John, or as future; nor will the order of this vision, after the ruin of the beast and false prophet, admit of any other.

Having the key of the bottomless pit] The abyss or deep, the same out of which the beast ascended, chapters xi. 7. and xvii. 8. And the key of this becomes no hand so well as his who has the keys of hell and death, chapter i. 18. who has all power in heaven and in earth, and has the power of hell, of opening and shutting it at his pleasure, which is signified by this phrase; see chapter ix. 1. The Ethiopic version reads, "the key of the sun," where some have thought hell to be; and yet the same version renders the word, "the deep," in 3.

And a great chain in his hand] The key in one hand, and the chain in another; by which last is meant, not any material chain, with which spirits cannot be bound, nor indeed sometimes bodies possessed by evil spirits, *Mark* v. 3, 4. but the almighty power of Christ, which he will now display in binding Satan faster and closer than ever.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

And he laid hold on the dragon] By whom is meant not paganism, for that was destroyed in the Roman empire under the sixth seal, and was the consequence of the war between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; and before this time it will be destroyed in other parts under the sixth and seventh vials, when the kings of the earth, being gathered together at Armageddon, will be slain, and the cities of the nations will fall, not only papal, but pagan, and Mahometan; and what will not, will be converted, for before this time the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ: but the devil himself is intended, so called, partly because of his great power, authority, and cruelty he has exercised in the world; and because of the venom and poison of idolatry, superstition, false doctrine, and worship, with which he has infected the inhabitants of it.

That old serpent] So called with respect to his cunning and subtlety, as well as his antiquity, being from the beginning of the creation, and having as early beguiled our first parents.

Which is the Devil, and Satan] The accuser of God and men, and the adversary of them both. The Complutensian edition, and Syriac version add, "which deceiveth the whole world;" and the Arabic version, "the deceiver of the whole world;" which seems to be taken out of chapter xiii. 9. see the note there. Him Christ laid hold on, and whom he held fast, as the word signifies:

nifies: Christ will now take him, apprehend him, and detain him, as his prisoner; in the wilderness, Satan only felt the dint of his sword, the written word of God, and was obliged to leave him; but now he will feel the weight of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; in the agony or conflict with him in the garden, he was conquered by prayer; and on the cross Christ destroyed him through death, but now he will be seized by his power, and crushed under his hand.

And bound him a thousand years] With the great chain he had in his hand: the devil is in chains now, is under the power of divine providence, and can do nothing without divine permission; but this chain is long, and he appears oftentimes to have great liberty, and ranges about the air and earth, and does much mischief; but now he will be so bound by the power of Christ over him, that he will not be able to stir hand or foot, to disturb the saints, or deceive the nations, whether with false worship, and false doctrine, or by stirring them up to persecute the saints. So of the devil, Asmodeus, it is said in *Tobit* viii. 3. that the angel Raphael, *מִכָּאֵל*, bound him. The space of a thousand years is not a certain number for an uncertain, or a large and indeterminate space of time, as in *Psalms* xc. 4. and cv. 8. these years are to be taken, not indefinitely, but definitely, for just this number of years exactly, as appears from their having the article prefixed to them; and are called afterwards no less than four times, *καὶ χίλια ἔτη*, the thousand years, or these thousand years, *γ.* 3—7. and from the things which are attributed to the beginning and ending of these years, which fix the epochs, and period of them; as the binding of Satan, when they begin, and the loosing of him when they end, as well as the reign of the saints with Christ during the whole time; to which may be added, the resurrection of the saints at the commencement of them, and the resurrection of the wicked at the close: but the great question is, whether they are begun or not? if they are begun, when they began; and if not, when they will. Some think that they began either at the birth of Christ, or at his resurrection, or at the destruction of Jerusalem. I put these together, because they were all in one century, within the compass of seventy years, or thereabout; so that if the thousand years began at either of them, they must end in the same century, in 1100. Now, though upon Christ's coming, Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and multitudes of men, possessed with devils, were dispossessed by Christ, and he that had the power of death, the devil, was destroyed by him;

and upon the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles in the Gentile world, the prince of the world was cast out, his oracles were struck dumb, multitudes were converted, and churches were set up every where, yet still Satan was not bound: he was not bound before the death of Christ; witness the many bodies of men possessed by him; his tempting Christ himself in the wilderness; his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross; his putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him, and filling the chief-priests and scribes with malice and envy against him, to seek his death, which they brought about: nor was he bound, so as not to deceive the Jews, either before, or after the death of Christ, nor is he to this day: they were in Christ's time under the influence of their father the devil, whose lusts they would do, and did, in putting Christ to death; and after his death, they were instigated by Satan to persecute his apostles in Judea, and elsewhere; and though after the destruction of Jerusalem they had no more power to act in this way, yet they had no less ill-will and malice against the christians, and are to this day filled with enmity against them, and are led captive by Satan, and given up to believe a lie, that the Messiah is not come, and to reject the true Messiah, and to expect a false one: and as for the heathen world, notwithstanding the progress of the Gospel in it, yet for the first three hundred years paganism was the established religion of the Roman empire; and christianity was every where spoken against, despised, and persecuted, and sometimes triumphed over, as if it was extinct; and Satan could never be said to be bound, and in prison himself, when he cast such multitudes into prison, and caused them to have tribulation ten days, *Rev.* ii. 10. in which so many martyrs suffered: nor did Satan appear to be bound, with respect to the church; the mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostles times, and there were then many antichrists in the world, deceivers, false teachers and heretics; there was a synagogue of Satan, *Rev.* ii. 9. and such a set of vile persons under the name of christians, as scarce ever was in the world; to which may be added, the great decline of love, and other graces, and of the purity of doctrine and worship in the best churches, and the many contentions among themselves, in which Satan had a great hand, and therefore could not be bound: moreover, some hundreds of years before the thousand years ended, beginning from either of the above dates, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the pope, or western antichrist, was revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan, 2 *Thess.* ii. 9. and therefore surely he could:

could not be bound then: besides, Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, sprung up, who opened the bottomless pit, and let out the smoke of it, by the Alcoran he delivered, and the false worship he set up: nor was there any thing in the eleventh century, which answered to the loosing of Satan, to the Gog and Magog army, their war with the saints, and the issue of it; nor were the nations then more deceived, than they had been in some centuries past; at least they were deceived in centuries past, both by the pope and Mahomet, which they would not have been, had Satan been bound then: to which may be subjoined, that if Satan was loosed, then he cannot be said to be loosed *a little season*, as in *ſ. 3.* in comparison of the thousand years, as that must be understood; since it is now between six and seven hundred years since, which is more than half a thousand years. Others begin these years at Constantine's coming to the imperial throne; but though there was at that time a great spread of the Gospel, an enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and a weakening of Satan's, yet Satan was far from being bound; see chapters xii. 7, 8. and xiii. 15. witness the flood of errors and heresies which he quickly brought in, as the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies, the one confounding the natures, the other dividing the person of Christ; the Pelagian heresy, which obscured the grace of God, and advanced the free will of man; the Macedonian heresy, which denied the divinity of the Spirit; and especially the Arian heresy, which was opposed to the deity of Christ, and which introduced great contentions and confusion in the churches, and issued in a violent persecution of them, being embraced by the sons of Constantine; not to take notice of Julian, an heathen emperor, ascending the throne, who by many devilish arts endeavoured to extirpate christianity; nor what has been observed before, the rise of both Mahomet in the east, and the Romish antichrist in the west, which were both within this period; in process of time the western empire was overrun by the Goths and Vandals, and the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks; to which may be added, the violent persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenſes, before the year 1300, about which time the thousand years must cease, according to this computation, for opposing the pope of Rome, and who were slain where Satan had his seat, *Revelation ii. 13.* and therefore not bound; nor was there any thing happened in that century which might answer to the loosing of him. Others date these thousand years from the reformation, and so not much more than two hundred of them are yet passed: but that Satan

was not bound then, and is not now, is manifest. All the popish nations have not been reformed, but still remain under the deception; and some that have been, have revolted again; and the devil has continued to deceive the nations with that false worship, and to stir them up to persecute the reformed. Witness the burning of them here in queen Mary's days, the massacres in France and Ireland, the present inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the persecution of the Hugonots in France, and other protestants elsewhere: and this is further evident from the decline in the reformed churches, both as to doctrine, discipline, and conversation; from the spread of errors and heresies of all kinds ever since, and especially in our age; and from the general profaneness and infidelity of the times, which, when considered, no man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or these thousand years begin, till after the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of all the antichristian powers, pagan, papal, and Mahometan, as appears from the order of this vision, and its connection with the preceding chapter.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And cast him into the bottomless pit] Or deep, into which the devils desired they might not be sent, and which they dreaded as a torment, it may be, because a place of confinement, *Luke viii. 31.* *Matt. viii. 29.* for this is called a prison, *ſ. 7.* and is distinguished from the lake of fire, into which the devil is afterwards cast, *ſ. 10.*

And shut him up] That so he might not rove about in the air, nor go to and fro in the earth, nor walk about like a roaring lion, seeking to affright, disturb, or devour.

And set a seal upon him] Or upon the door of the pit, for further security, as was upon the stone at the mouth of the lion's den, *Dan. vi. 17.* and of Christ's sepulchre, *Matt. xxvii. 66.* The Jews (*u*) make mention of a stone they call She-tijah, with which the Lord of the world "sealed the mouth of the great deep," or bottomless pit, at the beginning; but here not that, but Satan in it is sealed. The Alexandrian copy reads,

(u) Targum Jon. in Esod. xxviii. 30.

reads, "and sealed him firmly," so that it was impossible for him to break out: the end of this apprehension, binding, imprisonment, and security of Satan is,

[That he should deceive the nations no more] That is, by drawing them into idolatry, false worship, and false doctrine; and by exciting them to make war against the saints, or to persecute them, as appears from *Y. 8.* as he had done before; and it is notorious enough, that he has deceived them both these ways; he deceived the pagan nations not only before, but since the coming of Christ, to worship the heathen deities; and the papists, who are called Gentiles, or nations, *chap. xi. 2.* to fall down to idols of gold, silver, stone, and wood; and the nation of the Jews to entertain a false and deluded notion of the Messiah; and all of them, in their turns, to persecute the people of God, as the Jews at the death of Stephen, and afterwards; the pagan emperors for the first three hundred years after Christ; the papists from the rise of the beast, who had power given him to make war with the saints, and overcome them; but now he will be under such restraint, and in such close confinement, that he will not be able to move the wicked nations to any thing of this kind, as he will when he is loosed at the end of the thousand years; nor will he be able so much as to tempt any of the saints, during this term of time, nor give them the least molestation or uneasiness.

[Till the thousand years shall be fulfilled] Or ended, the whole space of them run out.

[And after that he must be loosed a little season] A small space of time, in comparison of the thousand years; how long it will be exactly, cannot be said; and this *must* be, not because he cannot be held any longer, or through any weakness in Christ; but because of the decree of God, who has so appointed it, for the glorifying of himself, in the salvation of his people, and in the final destruction of the devil, and the Gog and Magog army.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their forehead, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

[And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them] Besides the throne of God the Father, and the throne of glory, on which the Son of God sits, and the twelve thrones for the twelve apostles of the Lamb; there will be thrones set or pitched, for all the saints, *Dan. vii. 9.* who will sit on them, in the character of kings, and as conquerors, and shall sit quiet, and undisturbed, and be in perfect ease, and peace, for they that sit on them are the same persons hereafter described in this verse; for after the binding of Satan, an account is given of the happiness and glory of the saints during that time.

[And judgment was given unto them] That is, power, dominion, regal authority, possession of a kingdom, answerable to their character as kings, and to their position, sitting on thrones, *Dan. vii. 22, 27.* unless it should be rather understood of justice being done them, which does not so manifestly take place in the present state of things, and of which they sometimes complain; but now righteous judgment will be given for them, and against their enemies; their persons will be openly declared righteous; their characters will be cleared of all false imputations fastened on them; and their works and sufferings for Christ will be taken notice of in a way of grace, and rewarded in a very glorious manner. And so it may respect their being judged themselves, but not their judging of others, the wicked, which is the sole work of Christ; nor will the wicked now be upon the spot to be judged; nor is that notion to be supported by *Matt. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.* see the notes there. The Jews fancy, that their chief men shall judge the world in the time to come; for so they say (*w*), "in future time, (or in the world to come) the holy blessed God will sit, and kings will place thrones for the great men of Israel, and they shall sit and judge the nations of the world with the holy blessed God:" but the persons here meant are not Jews, but sufferers for the sake of Jesus, as follows.

[And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God] These, with the persons described in the next clause, are they who will sit on thrones, during the thousand years of Satan's being bound, and will have judgment given them; even such who have bore witness to the truth of Jesus, being the Son of God, the true Messiah, and the only saviour of sinners, and to him as the essential Word of God, or to the written word of God, the whole

w) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4.

whole Gospel, all the truths and doctrines of it; and who have been beheaded for bearing such a testimony, as John the Baptist was, the first of the witnesses of Jesus: and since this kind of punishment was a Roman one, it seems particularly to point at such persons who suffered under the Roman pagan emperors, and to design the same souls said to be under the altar, and to cry for vengeance, chapter vi. 9. This clause, in connection with the former, is differently rendered; the Syriac version renders it thus, "and judgment was given to them, and to the souls that were beheaded," &c. the Arabic version, "and to them was given the judgment of the souls killed," &c. the Ethiopic version, "and then I saw a seat, and the son of man sat upon it, and he rendered to them judgment for the souls of them that were slain for the law of the Lord Jesus."

And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands] See chapter xiii. 1, 4, 14—16. This describes such who shall have made no profession of the popish religion, nor have supported it in any way; who shall not have joined in the idolatry of the Romish antichrist, but shall have protested against it, and departed from it, and shall have adhered to Christ, and to the true worship of God; see chapters xiv. 1. and xv. 2. And so this, with the preceding character, includes all the saints that lived under Rome pagan, and Rome papal, to the destruction of antichrist, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; not that these martyrs and confessors, or even all the saints of their times, are the only persons that shall share in the glory and happiness of the thousand years reign of Christ, and binding of Satan; for all the saints will come with Christ, and all the dead in Christ will rise first, or be partakers of the first resurrection; and all that are redeemed by his blood, of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever age of the world they have lived, even from the beginning of it, shall be kings and priests, and reign with him on earth; *Zech. xiv. 5. 1 Thess. iii. 13. and chap. iv. 14, 16. Rev. v. 9, 10.* though John only takes notice of these, because the design of this book, and of the visions shown to him, was only to give a prophetic history of the church, from his time, to the end of the world; and these particularly are observed to encourage the saints under sufferings for Christ.

And they lived] Meaning not spiritually, for so they did before, and whilst they bore their testimony to Christ, and against antichrist, and previous to their death; nor in their successors, for it would not be just and reasonable that they

should be beheaded for their witness of Christ and his word, and others should live and reign with Christ in their room and stead; nor is this to be understood of their living in their souls, for so they live in their separate state; the soul never dies; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; but the sense is, that they lived again, as in *1. 5*, they lived corporally; their souls lived in their bodies, their bodies being raised again, and re-united to their souls, their whole persons lived; or the souls of them that were beheaded lived; that is, their bodies lived again, the soul being sometimes put for the body, *Psal. xvi. 10.* and this is called the first resurrection in the next verse.

And reigned with Christ a thousand years] As all that suffer with him will, and as all that will live godly must, and do, *2 Tim. ii. 12.* and chap. iii. 12. Christ being descended from heaven, and having bound Satan, and the dead saints being raised, and the living ones changed, he will reign among them personally, visibly, and gloriously, and in the fullest manner; all the antichristian powers will be destroyed; Satan will be in close confinement; death, with respect to Christ and his people, will be no more; the heavens and the earth will be made new, and all things will be subject to him; and all his saints will be with him, and they shall reign with him; they shall be glorified together; they shall sit on the throne with him, have a crown of righteousness given them, and possess the kingdom appointed for them; they will reign over all their enemies; Satan will be bruised under their feet, being bound; the wicked will be shut up in hell, and neither will be able to give them any disturbance; and sin and death will be no more: this reign will not be in a sensual and carnal way, or lie in possessing worldly riches and honours, in eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; the saints will not be in a mortal, but in an immortal state; the children of this resurrection will be like the angels; and this reign will be on earth, chap. v. 10. the present earth will be burnt up, and a new one formed, in which these righteous persons will dwell, *2 Pet. iii. 13.* of which see the note on chap. xxi. 1. and it will last a thousand years; not distinct from, but the same with the thousand years in which Satan will be bound; for if they were distinct from them, and should commence when they are ended, the reign of Christ with his saints would be when Satan is loosed, which is utterly inconsistent with it. The Syriac version very rightly renders it, "these thousand years," referring to those of Satan's binding. Nor are these thousand years to be understood prophetically, for as many years as there

are

are days in a thousand years; for as this would defer the judgment of the wicked, and the ultimate glory of the saints, to a prodigious length of time, so it should be observed, that prophetic time will now be no longer, according to the angel's oath in chap. x. 6. but these are to be understood literally and definitely, as before, of just such an exact number and term of years; see 2 *Pet.* iii. 8. this is a perfect number, and is expressive of the perfection of this state, and is a term of years that neither Adam, nor any of his sons, arrived unto; but Christ the second Adam shall see his seed, and shall prolong his days longer than any of them, *Isaiah* liii. 10. it is an observation of the Jewish Rabbins (*x*), that the day in *Gen.* ii. 17. is the day of the holy blessed God (that is, a thousand years) and therefore the first Adam did not perfect, or fill up his day, for there wanted seventy years of it: and it is a notion that prevails with them, that the days of the Messiah will be a thousand years (*y*); and so they will be at his second coming, but not at his first, which they vainly expect, it being past: and also they say (*z*), that in these thousand years God will renew his world, and that then the righteous will be raised, and no more return to dust; which agrees with John's new heaven and new earth during this state, and with the first resurrection: and so Jerom, who was conversant with the Rabbins, says (*a*) that the Jews expect a thousand years reign.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

But the rest of the dead] Meaning not the dead saints, for they will be all raised together, but the wicked dead; and not them as morally or spiritually, but as corporally dead: these

Lived not again until the thousand years were finished] So that there will be such an exact term of years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the wicked; nor will there be any wicked living upon earth, or in bodies, during that time; for the wicked dead will not be raised with the saints at Christ's coming, and the wicked living will be destroyed in the conflagration of the world, and neither of them shall live again until the end of these years. This clause is left out in the Syriac version.

This is the first resurrection] Which is not to be connected with the living again of the rest of the

dead at the end of the thousand years, for that will be the second and last resurrection; but with the witnesses of Jesus, and the true worshippers of God living again, in order to reign with Christ a thousand years; for this resurrection is not meant of a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and conversion is sometimes so represented, it cannot be designed here; for such a resurrection the above witnesses and worshippers were partakers of before their sufferings, and which was antecedently necessary to their witness and worship; besides, this resurrection was future in John's time, and was what was to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years; whereas the spiritual resurrection was before his time, and has been ever since the beginning, and is successive in all ages, and not affixed to any one period of time, though there may be more instances of it in one age than in another; nor is this ever called the first resurrection, nor can any reason be given why it should; for though one man may be converted before another, his conversion cannot be called the first resurrection, since there are many instances of this nature before, and many more after; besides, at this time, there will be none of God's people to be raised in this sense; they will be all quickened and converted before; the nation of the Jews will be born again, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; to which may be added, that if the first resurrection is to be understood in a spiritual sense, then the second resurrection of the wicked dead, at the end of the thousand years, must be understood in like manner; nor is a reviving of the cause of Christ and his interest here intended, particularly through the calling of the Jews, and the numerous conversion of the Gentiles; for though the former of these especially is signified by the quickening of the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, and is expressed by bringing the Jews out of their graves, and is called life from the dead, *Rom.* xi. 15. yet that cannot with any propriety be called the first resurrection; for there was a great reviving of true religion in the time of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, especially after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, both among Jews and Gentiles; and there was a revival of the christian religion in the times of Constantine, and again at the reformation from popery; and as for the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles in the latter day, that will be the last reviving of the cause and interest of Christ, which will usher in his spiritual reign, and therefore should rather be called the last, than the first resurrection; besides, this affair will be over before this time; this is signified by the marriage of the Lamb in the preceding

(x) Bemidbar Rabba, §. 5. fol. 183. 4. vid. Jaechiad, in Dan. vii. 25.

(y) Midrash Tillim, fol. 4. 2. (z) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. 2. & Gloss. in ibid. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 42. 1. & 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 130. 2.

(a) Comment. in Zach. xiv. 16, 13.

ceding chapter; and the kingdoms of the world will become Christ's under the seventh trumpet, and both will be in the spiritual reign: moreover, this does by no means agree with the character of the persons who shall share in this resurrection, they are such who shall have lived and suffered, at least many of them, under Rome pagan and papal, *1. 4.* and therefore can never be understood of Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, when neither one nor other shall be any more. To which may be subjoined, that if this was the sense, then this cause must revive also among the wicked at the end of the thousand years, whereas, when they are raised, they will attempt the very reverse. It remains then, that by this first resurrection must be meant a corporal one; for as some of those that will live again were corporally beheaded, and all of them corporally died, they will be corporally raised again; and in such sense will the rest of the dead be raised at the end of these years; with respect to which this is properly called the first resurrection; it is the first in time, it will be at the beginning of the thousand years, and the second will be at the close; the dead in Christ will rise first in order of time, *1 Thess. iv. 16.* see the note there; they will have the dominion in this sense over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection: Christ's resurrection is indeed first, but that is the cause and pledge of this; and there were particular resurrections both before and after his, but they were to a mortal state; and there were some saints that rose from the dead immediately after his resurrection; but these were but few, and were designed as an earnest of this; besides, though it was a resurrection, it was not *the* resurrection; and it may be further observed, that the resurrection of the righteous will be the first at the coming of Christ, *1 Cor. xv. 22.* there will be none then before theirs; theirs will be the first; the resurrection of the wicked, to which this is opposed as the first, will not be till a thousand years after: add to all which, that this resurrection will be *a $\rho\omega\tau\eta$, the first*, that is, the best, as the word is used in *Luke xv. 22.* the chief, the principal; the resurrection of the wicked can hardly be called a resurrection in comparison of it, and in many places theirs is not taken notice of where this is, as in *1 Cor. xv. 1 Thess. iv.* the righteous will be raised by virtue of union to Christ, in consequence of his having the charge both of their souls and bodies, and in conformity to his glorious body, and to eternal life, which will not be the case of the wicked.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second

death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection] This may be considered either as descriptive of the persons that shall partake of this privilege; as that they are only such who are blessed with spiritual blessings, with a justifying righteousness, with pardon of sin, and regenerating grace, and who are sanctified by the Spirit of God; these, and these only, will be first raised, and will be called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, *Matt. xxv. 34.* or else as expressive of their happiness and holiness when raised; they shall be perfectly blessed in soul and body, and perfectly holy in both: they shall be blessed, for

On such the second death hath no power] Which is the lake of fire, *1. 14.* and chap. xxi. 8. the sense is, they shall escape everlasting burnings, the fire of hell, the torment and misery of the wicked; they shall be delivered from wrath to come; and as their bodies will die no more, their souls will not be subject to any sense of wrath, or to any sort of punishment: and they will be *holy*; they will have no sin in them.

But they shall be priests of God and of Christ] Of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, being made so to the former by the latter, chap. i. 6. or of God, even of Christ, that is, of God, who is Christ, since it follows:

And shall reign with him] They will be wholly devoted to, and employed in the service of God and of Christ, and will be continually offering up the sacrifices of praise, or singing the song of the Lamb, adoring the grace and goodness of God and Christ unto them, shewn them both in providence and in grace.

A thousand years] This is mentioned again, partly to assert the certainty of it, and partly to point at the blessedness of the risen saints.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

And when the thousand years are expired] Which are not yet expired; not in the year 1000, or 1033, or 1034, reckoning from the birth or death of Christ, when paganism, which had been destroyed in the Gentile world, was introduced into the church, which bore the christian name, thro' the man of sin; for this had been bringing in by degrees more or less from the times of Constantine; whence it appears, that Satan in this respect was loose before, and therefore this was not the time

of his loosing; nor in 1073, reckoning from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying and spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, in which year Hildebrand came to the popedom, who may be truly called the brand of hell; Damianus, a brother cardinal, who lived at the same time with him when he was archdeacon of Rome, calls him the holy devil; he was an impostor, forcerer, and necromancer, and by wicked arts got into the papal chair; this pope raised the papal power over princes to a very great height, and made the see of Rome absolutely independent, and all bishops dependent on it; he forbid bishops receiving their investiture from the emperor, or any lay person, under pain of excommunication: this is the pope that made the emperor, with his empress and child, wait three days bare-foot at his gates, in the depth of winter, before they could be admitted to him; that doctrine of devils, forbidding priests to marry, was established by him; and in his days that monstrous and absurd notion of transubstantiation began to prevail, though he himself used his brea den god but very roughly; for taking it to be really God, he required an answer from it against the emperor; but it not speaking, he threw it into the fire, and burnt it. Now it will be allowed, that the devil was loose at this time, but then so he was before: there had been popes before this who were conjurers, necromancers, and had familiarity and confederacy with the devil; and near five hundred years before this time, the pope was declared universal bishop by Phocas; and the forbidding priests marriage was started in the council of Nice, and was approved of by pope Siricius, long before this time, though it was now more firmly established; add to this, that if the expiration of the 1000 years, and the loosing of Satan were at this time, he must have been loosed near 700 years, which can never be called a little season, as in *ch. 3.* especially in comparison of the 1000 years, the time of his binding; when it is two thirds of that time: nor did these years expire in or about 1300 reckoning from Constantine, about which time pope Boniface the eighth lived, of whom it is said, that he came in like a fox, ruled like a lion, and died like a dog; upon his accession to the popedom, he instituted a jubilee, and on the first day he appeared in his pontifical habit, and gave the benediction to the people, and on the next day he clothed himself with an imperial habit, and put on a rich diadem, and sat on a throne, with a naked sword bore before him, when he uttered these words, *Eccis hic duo gladii*, "Behold here are two swords," referring to *Luke xxii. 38.* which the papists would have understood of the temporal and spiritual power which Peter and his successors

are possessed of; at the same time Ottoman was crowned emperor of the Mahometan nations, who founded the Turkish empire, and spread the Mahometan religion in Asia and Greece; and by both these; great disturbances and wars were occasioned, both in the east and west: but still this does not make it appear that now was the time of Satan's loosing; since before this time the papal power was at its utmost height, and the Mahometan religion had been hundreds of years in the world, and had greatly prevailed; and therefore Satan must be loosed before; and indeed, it is in vain to seek after the expiration of these years, and the loosing of Satan, when as yet the years are not begun, nor has Satan been bound, as has been shewn on *ch. 2.* but however, when they will be ended,

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison] During the thousand years he will be in a state of confinement, being bound, shut, and sealed up in the bottomless pit, which is therefore here called a prison, as is the place of damned spirits, in *1 Peter iii. 19.* but when these will be at an end, his chain will be taken off, at least will be lengthened; the seal upon him will be broken off, the bottomless pit will be opened, and he let loose; which will be done not by himself, but by him that bound him, or by divine permission.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

And shall go out] Of his prison, the bottomless pit, and shall walk to and fro in the earth, and go about like a deceitful serpent, and roaring lion, as before.

To deceive the nations] As he had done before the thousand years began, and from which he was restrained during that time; he had before deceived the pagan, papal, and Mahometan nations, and now he will go forth to deceive those at this time

Which are in the four quarters of the earth] All the world over: the names of which nations are,

Gog and Magog] Not the same which are mentioned in *Ezekiel*, chapters xxxviii. and xxxix. though there is an allusion to them, and from thence the names are taken, and some of the figures borrowed, and design the enemies of God's people, who will be in the world at this time; so the Jews (*b*) speak of a Gog and Magog, that will

(b) Targum in Cant. viii. 4. & Targum Hieros. in Num. xi. 26.

will come up against Jerusalem in the days of the Messiah, whom they still expect, by whom they shall be destroyed.

To gather them together to battle] Not one against another, as some think, as the pope against the Turk, and the Turk against the pope, nor are they designed at all; nor "to kill them," as the Ethiopic version renders it; but against the saints and people of God, in the beloved city and camp; herein will lie his deception of them.

The number of whom is as the sand of the sea] That is, innumerable, in allusion to Gog and Magog in *Ezek.* xxxviii. 9, 15, 16. but the great question is, who are meant by these?—Not the papists, the nations made drunk with the wine of Rome's fornication, the Gentiles, by whom the holy city is trodden under foot, and who will be angry when the time of avenging the saints is come, chapters xi. 2, 18. and xviii. 2. for these will be all destroyed, even all the remains of them, at the battle of Armageddon; nor is antichrist himself intended, who will be destroyed in the spiritual reign of Christ, with the breath of his mouth; and at the above decisive battle the beast and the false prophet will be taken alive, and cast into the lake of fire: nor are the Turks designed, the people of Magog being Scythians originally, as Josephus says (c), from whence the Turks sprung; or Tartarians, for Paulus Venetus (d) says, the countries of Gog and Magog are in Tartary, called Jug and Munjug; hence some think these are the same with the four angels bound at the river Euphrates, and loosed, whose armies are represented as exceeding numerous, chapter ix. 14, 16, 17. but though the Turkish dominions are very large, yet they do not extend to the four quarters of the world; and when the Turks were let loose, and came even into Europe, it was not against the true christians, the camp of the saints, the beloved city, as here, but against the anti-christian party; the papists have suffered most by the incursions of the Turks, though it has not brought them to repentance; besides, the loosing of the four angels, or the Turkish nations, and their chiefs, is long before these thousand years begin; that is past already, under the sixth trumpet, whereas the seventh trumpet will be blown, and all the seven vials poured out, and the world cleared of all Christ's enemies, and after that a thousand years must run out, before this Gog and Magog army will appear: nor are the Americans the nations here spoken of; for they are but in one quarter of the world; nor is there any reason to believe there will be there more enemies of

Christ's people than in any other part, since in the spiritual reign of Christ the earth shall be full of his knowledge, and his spiritual kingdom will be to the ends of the earth: and as for that notion that those inhabiting the other hemisphere will be saved from the general conflagration, there is no reason to believe it, since the earth, and whatsoever is therein, shall be burnt up, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. Some think that the wicked living in the distant parts of the world, in the corners of the earth, are meant, who upon Christ's coming, will flee thither, and remain in continual dread and terror to the end of the thousand years, when Satan will gather them together, and spirit them up against the saints; but this cannot be, because they will all be destroyed at the universal conflagration of the world; nor will there be any in the new earth but righteous persons: but these will be all the wicked dead, the rest of the dead, who lived not again until the thousand years are ended, when will be the second resurrection, the resurrection of all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; and these, with the posse of devils under Satan, will make up the Gog and Magog army: all the characters agree with them; these may be called nations, or Gentiles, being aliens from the true Israel of God, the dogs that will be without the holy city; these may be said to be in the four quarters of the world, since where they die and are buried, there they will rise and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; and as they will die enemies to Christ and his people, they will rise such; as they will go down to hell with their *weapons of war*, as is said of Meshech and Tubal, the people of Gog, *Ezek.* xxxii. 27. they will rise with the same; the grave, the dust of the earth, will make no change in their vile bodies, nor the flames of hell any alteration in the disposition of their minds; yea, as is said in the above place, they will *lay their swords under their beads*, and so be in a readiness when they rise, to make use of them against the saints, and to avenge themselves; for their envy, malice, and revenge, will be heightened and increased by their confinement and punishment in hell: nor need this be wondered at, since the devils, notwithstanding they have been so long expelled the realms of light, and have been in chains of darkness, and in expectation of everlasting torment, retain the same enmity as ever; and though the deception will be very great, to attack saints in an immortal state, who are like the angels that die not, nor will these die any more, and especially since Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords, who rules the nations with a rod of iron, will be at the head of them; yet it need not seem

(c) *Antiq.* l. 2. c. 6. §. 1.
Pentaglott. Col. 288.

(d) In Schindler, *Lex.*

strange, when they will rise as weak and feeble, and as little able to resist temptation, and as much exposed to seduction as they were before; Satan will have as much power over them as ever; and what with their own numbers, and the posse of devils at the head of them, and especially considering the desperateness of their state, and that this is their last struggle and effort for liberty, they will animate themselves and one another to this strange undertaking. These now may be called Gog and Magog, as the one signifies *covered*, the other open, or *uncovered*; these being all the enemies of Christ and his people, both secret and open: and this sense well accounts for their number, being as the sand of the sea; and which the Arabic version seems to confirm, "and Jagog and Magog shall rise with him." The Jews have a notion that this deception of Satan will be at the day of judgment, which agrees with this account; for immediately upon this will follow the judgment of the wicked: they say (e), "in the day that judgment shall be found in the world, and the holy blessed God shall sit upon the throne of judgment, Satan ילך ויחזק, "shall deceive above and below" (angels and men) and he shall be found to destroy the world, and to take away souls."

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth] Either the whole earth, in the several parts of which they will be raised; or the land of Israel, where Christ and his people will be; and so the wicked being raised, will come up from the several parts of the world, and spread themselves over the holy land; just as Gog and Magog are said to cover the land of Israel, as a cloud, *Ezekiel* xxxviii. 16. and it may be observed, that the very phrase of רחב ארץ "the breadth of thy land," is used of Immanuel's land, or the land of Israel, in *Isaiah* viii. 8.

And compassed the camp of the saints about] These are the blessed and holy ones, who have part in the first resurrection, even all the saints; not only the martyrs under the heathen persecutions, and the confessors of Christ under the papacy, but all the saints from the beginning of the world; these will be all encamped together, with the tabernacle of God in the midst of them, chapter xxi. 3. and Christ their king at the head of them,

(e) Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 1.

Micah ii. 13. the allusion is to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, about the tabernacle, which was in the midst of them, *Numb.* ii. 2. &c. afterwards the city of Jerusalem itself was called a camp, and answered in all respects to the camp in the wilderness (f), to which the reference is in *Heb.* xiii. 11—13. and which serves to illustrate the passage here, since it follows:

And the beloved city] Not Constantinople, as some have thought, but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, chap. xxi. 2. the general assembly and church of the first-born, beloved by God and Christ, and by the holy angels, and by one another; and these very probably will be with Christ upon the same spot of ground where the old Jerusalem stood, a city so highly favoured, and so much distinguished by God; so that where Christ suffered so much reproach and shame, and such an accursed death, he will now be glorified, and live in triumph with his saints.

And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them] Not material fire; with this the earth, and the bodies of the wicked then upon it, will be burnt at the beginning of the thousand years; but now their bodies will be raised immortal, and not capable of being consumed with such fire; but the fiery indignation of God, or his wrath, which will be poured out like fire, is here meant, which will destroy both body and soul; this is no other than the lake of fire, or second death, into which they will be cast; and which will not be until the judgment is over, though it is here related to show what will be the event and issue of their attack upon the saints: the allusion is to the fire sent upon Gog and Magog, and to the burning of their weapons, in *Ezek.* xxxviii. 22. and chap. xxxix. 6, 9, 10. and so the Jews (g) say of their Gog and Magog, that "they shall be killed with the burning of the soul, with a flame of fire, which shall come from under the throne of glory."

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

And the devil that deceived them] Both before death, in the present life, by tempting and drawing them into immorality and profaneness, or idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, or persecution of the

(f) T. Bad. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Hab-bechirah, c. 7. §. 11. (g) Targum Jon. in Num. xi. 26.

the saints; and after their resurrection, by instigating them to make this foolish attempt upon the saints of the most high.

Was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone] The same with the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; this will be his full torment, in which he is not as yet; and this will not be until the judgment is finished hereafter described; though it is here mentioned to issue the account of Satan at once, and to show what will be his final state and condition.

Where the beast and false prophet are] Chapter xix. 20. who for so many years have been companions in wickedness together; the beast being the first beast, that received his power, seat, and authority from the dragon, or devil; the false prophet being the second beast, or antichrist in his ecclesiastical capacity, as the beast is antichrist in his civil power, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders.

And shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever] That is, not only the devil, but the beast and false prophet, for the word is in the plural number: and this will be the case of all wicked men, of all whose minds are enmity to God and Christ, and to his people; and is a proof of the eternity of hell-torments.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw a great white throne] This vision refers not to the Gospel-dispensation, from the exaltation of Christ to his second coming; when he sat down on his throne at the right hand of God, and was declared Lord and Christ; when there was a shaking of the heavens and the earth, a removing of the Mosaic economy, and the ordinances of the ceremonial law in Judea, and of paganism in the Gentile world; when the Gospel was preached to all nations, and the dead in sins were quickened, and arose and stood before the throne of grace; when the books of the scriptures were opened and explained, and the book of life was also opened; and by the conversion of some, and not others, it was known who were written in it, and who were not, and men were judged to be alive or dead in a spiritual sense, according to the influence the opening of these books had upon them; and the powers of the world, comparable to a sea, and of death and hell; were not able to hold in the dead in sin, when they were called to life, with respect to whom death and

hell were destroyed; nor was the Gospel the favour of death to any but to such who were not written in the book of life. This, in other words, is the sum of Cocceius's sense of this vision; but this affair will be over, and all God's elect gathered in by the preaching of the Gospel, before this vision takes place: nor does it respect the restoration of the Jews, who now are as dead, like Ezekiel's dry bones, but will at this time be quickened, and stand upon their feet an exceeding great army, and will be gathered from the several parts where they are as dead; and when it will be known by their conduct and behaviour who are God's elect among them, and who are not; which is Brightman's interpretation of the vision: but this, as we have seen, will come to pass according to the vision in the preceding chapter, before the thousand years begin; whereas this vision will not begin to be accomplished until they are ended: it is best therefore to understand it of the general judgment at the last day, which is the common sense of ancient and modern interpreters; though it seems only to regard the judgment of the wicked, for no other are made mention of in it: the throne here seen, is a throne of judgment; it is called a great one, because a great person sat upon it, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, even he who is the great God, and judge of the whole earth; and because of the great work that will be transacted upon it, the judgment of all the wicked; this will be the greatest affize that ever was held; it is called the judgment of the great day, and the great and dreadful day of the Lord, *Jude 6. Mal. iv. 5.* this throne is said to be a white one; just as the same person is said to sit upon a white cloud, and ride upon a white horse, chapters xiv. 14. and xix. 11. it may be in allusion either to a white and serene cloud, or to a throne of ivory, such an one as Solomon made, *2 Chron. ix. 17.* and this is either expressive of the majesty and splendor of it, it being a throne of glory, or a glorious throne; *Matt. xxv. 31.* or else it may denote the purity and justice of him that sits on it, according to which he will proceed in judgment, and finish it; his character is the righteous judge, and the judgment he will execute will be righteous judgment.

And him that sat on it] The throne was not empty; one sat upon it, who is no other than the Son of God; to whom all judgment is committed, and who is ordained to be judge of quick and dead; and is every way fit for it, being of great knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, and of great integrity and faithfulness, as man and mediator, and being, as God, both omniscient and omnipotent.

nipotent, and so capable both of passing a right sentence, and of executing it; to which may be added, his great majesty and glory, necessary to strike an awe, and command an attention to him.

From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them] Which is to be understood not figuratively, as in chapters vi. 14. and xvi. 20. where in the one place is described the destruction of paganism, and in the other the destruction of the papacy, and all anti-christian powers; but literally, and not of the present earth and heaven, as they now are, for these will be burnt up with fire at the beginning of the thousand years, but of the new heaven and new earth, at the end of them; and the phrases of fleeing away, and place being found no more for them, shew the entire annihilation and utter abolition of them; after this there will be no place in being but the heaven of angel and saints, and the lake of fire, in which are the devils and damned spirits: but though this is mentioned here, it will not be till after the judgment is over; for how otherwise will the dead have a place to stand in before the throne, or hell, that is the grave, and also the sea, give up their dead, *ψ*. 12, 13. but it is observed here, though afterwards done, to set off the majesty of the judge upon the throne, at whose sight, and by whose power, this will be effected.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And I saw the dead] An account being given of the judge, next the persons to be judged are described, and in this clause, by the state and condition in which they had been; for it cannot be thought they were dead when they stood before the throne, but were raised from the dead; for this character is not descriptive of them as dead in trespasses and sins, though they are such as die in their sins, and rise in them, who are meant, but as having been corporally dead; these are the rest of the dead, the wicked, who lived not again until the thousand years were ended, *ψ*. 5. as for the righteous, they will be judged upon their resurrection from the dead in the beginning of the day of the Lord; and will be declared righteous and blessed, and be called upon and introduced to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, which

they shall have possessed a thousand years when these wicked dead will be raised: who are said to be

Small and great] Which may refer either to their age, being children and adult persons; or to their condition, being kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor; or to their characters, as greater or lesser sinners; and this description respects them as they are in this world, and is designed to shew that no consideration whatever, of age, condition, or character, will exempt them from the general judgment. This is a way of speaking used among the Jews (*b*), who say, "in the world of souls, חנוניות ומקטנים, "the great and the small" stand before God." The disputations of the schoolmen about the age and stature in which mankind will rise and be judged, are vain and foolish: these John saw

Stand before God] That is, Christ, who is God and judge of all; before his judgment-seat and throne, in order to be judged; for they will stand not as ministering to him, nor as having confidence before him; in this sense they shall not stand in the judgment, *Psalms* i. 5. but as guilty persons to receive their sentence of condemnation. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, "before the throne;" the sense is the same: for if they stood before the throne, they must stand before God, that sat upon it.

And the books were opened] The book of God's omniscience, which contains all the actions of the wicked, in which all their sins are taken notice of, and will now be brought to light; and the book of his remembrance, in which they are all written as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; and the book of the creatures, which they have abused, and which will witness against them; and the book of providence, the riches of whose goodness have been despised by them; and the book of the scriptures, both of Law and Gospel, as well as the book of nature, of the light of nature; see *Rom.* ii. 12, 16. to which may be added, the book of conscience; the consciences of men will be awakened, and will accuse them, and bear witness against them, and be as good as a thousand witnesses.

And another book was opened, which is the book of life] The same that is mentioned in chapters iii. 5. and xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. the book of eternal election, see the notes there. No other use seems to be made of this book in the judgment of the wicked, than only to observe whose names were not

(b) Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.

not written in it, as appears from *ŷ. 15.* reference seems to be had to *Dan. vii. 10.* It is a notion that has obtained among the Jews (*i*), that “at the beginning of the year (or every new year’s-day) *פתיחו ספרים* 3, “three books are “opened,” one of the wicked perfect, another “of the righteous perfect, and a third of those “between both;” and in the same treatise (*k*), they represent God at the same time of the year as a “king, sitting on a throne of judgment, and “the books of the living, and the books of the “dead *פתיחו* open before him:” this with them was a prelude and a figure of the future judgment.

And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works] That is, they were sentenced to everlasting condemnation and death, according to the just demerit of their wicked works; for no other are done by wicked men, nor can any other be in the books, since they are without God and Christ, and destitute of the Spirit, have no principle of grace to act from, nor any good end in view in any action of theirs. So the Jews say (*l*), “all “the works which a man does in this world are “written in a book,” and they come into thought “before the holy King, and they are manifest before him.”

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it] Which is not to be interpreted metaphorically of the world, and the men of it, who are like the troubled sea; but literally of the sea, and of all such who have been drowned in the waters of it, as were Pharaoh and his host; or have died upon the mighty waters, and have been cast into them, and devoured by the fishes; and particular regard may be had to the men of the old world, drowned by the flood; these shall be raised from thence; the sea shall deliver them up: now this, and what is expressed in the next clause, will not be done after the judgment is set, the books are opened, and the sentenced passed, but before all this, and in order to it, as the last clause of this verse shews.

And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them] Death, which is here represented as a person, and elsewhere as a king, reigning

and having power over men, signifies death in general, and every kind of death of which men have died, whether natural or violent, over whom it will now have no longer dominion, but will be obliged to deliver up all its subjects; and *hell* signifies the grave, which will now be opened, and deliver up all its prisoners, all that have been buried in the earth; see *Job xxvi. 5, 6.* the Ethiopic version adds, “and the earth delivered up them “that were dead in it;” but this seems unnecessary after the former.

And they were judged every man according to their works] Some to greater, some to lesser punishment, as their sinful works deserved.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This the second death.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire] Death cannot be taken properly, nor hell be the place of torment, for devils and damned spirits; since that is the lake of fire, for then the sense would be, hell is cast into hell; but either by these the devil is meant, who has the power of death, and is the prince of hell, were it not that the casting of him into this lake is mentioned before in *ŷ. 10.* or it denotes the destruction and abolition of death and the grave, that from henceforth they should no more have power over men, or have any under their dominion, and in their hands; and so what has been promised, will now be fully performed; *Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xvi. 26.* see chapter *xxi. 4.* or rather the wicked dead, which they shall have delivered up, and will be judged and sentenced to eternal death, *ŷ. 13.*

This is the second death] Or the destruction of the soul and body in hell, which will consist in an eternal separation of both from God, and in a continual sense of his wrath and displeasure. The Alexandrian copy, and the Complutensian edition read, “this second death is the lake of fire;” and so the Arabic version, “and this is the second “death, even the lake of fire;” and not much different is the Ethiopic version, “the second “death, which is the fire of hell.”

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life] Upon the opening of it, *ŷ. 12.* as all that worship the beast, and wonder after him, chapters *xiii. 8.* and *xvii. 8.* and all wicked men, every one of them.

Was cast into the lake of fire] Where are the devil, beast, and false prophet, chapters *xix. 20.* and

(i) T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. (k) Ibid. fol. 32. 2. & Erasin, fol. 10. 2. (l) Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 3.

and xx. 10. It is a saying of R. Isaac (m), "woe to the wicked, who are not written בְּסֵפֶר, "in the book," for they shall perish "in hell for ever and ever:" and in the Targum on Ezek. xiii. 9. it is said of the false prophets, "that בְּכַתְּבֵי הֵי עֲלָמָה, "in the writing of eternal life" (or in the book of eternal life) which "is written for the righteous of the house of Israel, they shall not be written." There seems to be some allusion in the phrase used here, and in the preceding verse, and elsewhere in this book, to the lake Asphaltites, a sulphureous lake, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which the Jews call the salt sea, or the bituminous lake; and whatsoever was useless, or rejected, or abominable, or accursed, they used to say, to shew their rejection and detestation of it, let it be cast into the sea of salt, or the bituminous lake; thus for instance, "any vessels that had on them the image of the sun, or of the moon, or of a dragon לִיִּם חֲמָלִים, "let them cast them "into the salt sea," or bituminous lake (n).

CHAP. XXI.

This chapter contains an account of the happy state of the church, consisting of all the elect, both Jews and Gentiles, which will take place upon the first resurrection, and will continue during the thousand years reign mentioned in the preceding chapter. The seat of the church in these happy times will be the new heaven and the new earth, *ch. 1.* the church that will dwell there is described by its names, the holy city, and new Jerusalem; by its descent, from heaven; and by its state and ornament, being prepared and adorned as a bride for her husband, *ch. 2.* and her happiness is expressed by the presence of God with her, and communion with him enjoyed by her, and by a freedom from all evils endured in the present state of things, *ch. 3, 4.* after which John hears the voice of him that sat on the throne, declaring himself to be the author of the new heaven and earth; ordering him to write, that what had been said was true and faithful; affirming that things were now done and finished; calling himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; promising grace to the thirsty soul, the inheritance of all things to the overcomer, and also divine sonship; and threatening the second death to sinners, whose characters are given, *ch. 5—8.* next John has a vision of

the bride before spoken of; the preface to it is in *ch. 9, 10.* in which is signified that one of the seven angels that had the seven vials talked to him in a very free and familiar manner, and proposed to shew him the Lamb's wife; and in order to it carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him the city before-mentioned, said to be great, holy, and heavenly; and which is described by the glory of God upon it, and the light that was in it, comparable to a chrystal—jasper stone, *ch. 11.* by its wall, which is great and high; and by its gates and foundations; its gates are in number twelve, twelve angels at them, and on them written the twelve names of the children of Israel, and these situated three at each point, east, west, north, and south; and its foundations are also twelve, having the names of the twelve apostles on them, *ch. 12—14.* by the measure of it, which the angel took with his golden reed; of the city, which was twelve thousand furlongs, it being four square, and its length, breadth, and height equal; and of the wall, which was a hundred forty and four cubits, *ch. 15—17.* and next the city is described by the matter of which it was built; the wall of jasper; the city of pure gold, like to clear glass; the foundations of precious stone, each foundation being of one stone; the gates of pearls, each gate being of one pearl; the street of the city of pure gold, like transparent glass, *ch. 18—21.* and then by the temple in it, which is no other than the Lord God and the Lamb; and by the light, which is the same, it having no need of sun or moon, *ch. 22, 23.* and next by its inhabitants, the nations of the saved ones, who walk in its light, and the kings of the earth, that bring their honour and glory to it; by its safety and security, and by the purity of it, none but undefiled persons, and such who are written in the Lamb's book of life, being admitted into it, *ch. 24—27.*

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth] This vision relates to a glorious state of the church, not in the times of the apostles, or first dispensation of the Gospel; when the old Jewish church-state, with its ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, passed away, and a new church-state, a new dispensation, new ordinances, and a new people took place;

(m) Tosephta in ib. fol. 78. 2. (n) T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 2. vid. ib. fol. 49. 1. & 53. 1. & 71. 2. & Nazir, fol. 24. 2. & 26. 1. 2. Bava Metzia, fol. 52. 2. Temura, fol. 22. 2. & Meila, fol. 9. 2. & 10. 1.

place; and when saints came not to mount Sinai, but to mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and when God tabernacled and dwelt with men in particular churches and congregations; and the curse of the law, and the sting of death were taken away by Christ, and there was no condemnation to them that were in him; which is the sense of some: but death did not then cease, it has reigned over men in common ever since, in a natural way, and immediately upon that dispensation arose persecution unto death, both by Jews and Gentiles; and for the first three hundred years, instead of death being no more, and sorrow and sighing fleeing away, there was scarce any thing else; nor can it be said that there was no temple, or places of public worship, or that the church had no need of the sun and moon of the Gospel and Gospel-ordinances then, since these have continued ever since, and will to the end of the world; nor did the kings of the earth bring their honour and glory into that church-state in any sense, but set themselves against it, and endeavoured to destroy it; nor were the churches even of that age so pure as here described, *ŷ. 27.* many persons both of bad principles and bad practices crept into them; there were tares among the wheat, goats among the sheep, and foolish virgins with the wise: nor does this vision refer to the times of Constantine, when the old pagan idolatry was removed out of the empire, and the christian religion was revived, and came to be in a flourishing condition, and a new face of things appeared, and christianity was embraced and honoured by the emperor, and the great men of the earth; there was not that purity as in this state; the christian doctrine and worship were soon corrupted, being mixed with Judaism and paganism; a flood of errors was brought in by Arius, Eutychius, Nestorius, Macedonius, Pelagius, and others; yea, doctrines of devils, and which at length issued in a general apostacy, and in the revelation of the man of sin; nor was there that peace and comfort, and freedom from evils, as from death, pain, and sorrow; witness the Arian persecution, the incursions of the Goths and Vandals into the empire, and the inhuman butcheries and numerous massacres and murders of the popish party since. Nor has this vision any thing to do with the conversion and restoration of the Jews, when they will become a new people, quit their old principles and modes of worship, and there will be no more among them the sea of corrupt doctrine, respecting the Messiah, the works of the law, &c. for this will be over before this vision takes place, as appears from the sixth chapter: nor does it belong

to the spiritual reign of Christ, which will be in the present earth, whereas this glorious state of the church will be in the new heavens and new earth; that will be at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and in the Philadelphian church-state, this will not be till prophetic time and antichristian times will be no more, when the mystery of God will be finished, and after the Laodicean state is at an end; in that there will be public worship, the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, but not in this; and though there will be then great spirituality and holiness, yet not in perfection, nor will the churches be clear of hypocrites and nominal professors, and will at last sink into a Laodicean state. Nor is this vision to be interpreted of the church triumphant in heaven, or of the ultimate glory of the saints there; since the new Jerusalem here described descends from heaven, that is, to earth, where the saints will reign with Christ; and since the church is represented as a bride, prepared and adorned for her husband, but not as yet at the entrance of this state, delivered up to him; and since the tabernacle of God is said to be with men, that is, on earth; and this dwelling of God with them is as in a tabernacle, which is moveable, and seems to be distinct from the fixed state of the saints in the ultimate glory; to which may be added, that in this state, Christ, as king of saints, will be peculiarly and distinctly glorified, whereas in the ultimate one, when the kingdom is delivered to the Father, God will be all in all: this therefore is to be understood of the glorious state of the church during the thousand years of Satan's binding, and the saints living and reigning with Christ; the holy city, and new Jerusalem, is the same with the beloved city in chapter xx. 9. what is there briefly hinted, is here largely described and insisted on; this will be the time and state when the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, will first meet together, and be brought to Christ, and be presented by him to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and Christ will reign gloriously among them: the seat of this church-state will be the *new heaven and new earth* which John saw, and which are the same that Peter speaks of, in which dwelleth righteousness, or in which righteous persons only dwell, *2 Pet. iii. 13.* for as the first heaven and earth both here and there are to be understood literally, so in like manner the new heaven and new earth; which will be new, not with respect to the substance, but their qualities; they will be renewed, or purged from every thing that is disagreeable, and is the effect of the sin of man; the first heaven and earth

were made chiefly for men, but on account of the sin of man, the earth was cursed, and brought forth thorns and thistles, and both the earth and air, or the heaven, were attended with noxious vapours, &c. and the whole creation was made subject to vanity and corruption: from all which they will be cleared at the general conflagration, and a new earth and heaven will appear, fit for the habitation of the second Adam, and his posterity, for the space of a thousand years. So the Jews speak of new heavens, as *שמים חדשים*, renewed ones, which are the secrets of sublime wisdom (e): and they say (p), that the holy blessed God will renew his world a thousand years, and that in the seventh millennium there will be new heavens and a new earth (q).

For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away] Not those in chapter xx. 11. but the heaven and the earth which were first made, which passed away, as Peter also says, adding with a great noise; meaning not as to their substance, but as to their form, fashion, and qualities.

And there was no more sea] Which may be understood either as to the being of it; it was exhausted, as the Ethiopic version renders it, being dried up by the conflagration; see *Amos* vii. 4. and if Mr Burnet's hypothesis can be supported, that the paradisaical earth, or the earth before the flood, was without a sea, that being made, with the mountains and hills, by the falling of the surface of the earth into the waters under it, there is a surprising agreement between that earth and this new one; but the Alexandrian copy reads, "and I saw the sea no more;" it might be in being, though John saw it not; and since at the end of the thousand years, the sea will give up the dead which are in it, it must be in being, unless it can be interpreted of the place where the sea was: wherefore it seems best to understand it with respect to its use and qualities; and that as the heaven and earth will pass away, not as to their substance, but quality, so in like manner the sea will be no more used for navigation, nor may it be a tumultuous and raging one, or have its flux and reflux, or its waters be salt, as now; the schoolmen say it will no more be a fluid, but will be consolidated into the globe as the sphere; and in a mystical sense, there will be no more wicked men; tumultuous and turbulent men are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, *Isaiah* lviii. 20. for in the new heavens and

earth only righteous persons will dwell, 2 *Peter* iii. 13.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I John saw the holy city] The same with the beloved city in chapter xx. 9. the church of God: sometimes the church militant, is called a city, of which the saints are now fellow-citizens, governed by wholesome laws, and enjoying many privileges; but here the general assembly and church of the first born, or all the elect of God, are intended, the whole body and society of them, being as a city, compact together; called *holy*, not only because set apart to holiness by God the Father, and their sins expiated by the blood of Christ, or because he is made sanctification to them, or because internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, which now is but in part; but because they will be perfectly holy in themselves, without the being of sin in them, or any spot of it on them; and John, for the more strong ascertaining the truth of this vision, expresses his name, who saw it, to whom God sent his angel, and signified to him by these Apocalyptic visions what should be hereafter; though the name is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

New Jerusalem] The church of God, both in the Old and New Testament, is often called Jerusalem, to which its name, which signifies the vision of peace, agrees; it was the city of the great King, whither the tribes went up to worship; it was a free city, and a fortified one; the Gospel church-state in its imperfection is called the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of all; and here the church in its perfect state is called the new Jerusalem, where will be compleat peace and prosperity; and which is called *new*, because it has its seat in the new heaven and new earth; the inhabitants of which will appear in their new and shining robes of immortality and glory; and to distinguish it from the old Jerusalem, and even from the former state of the church; for this will be *שלישית*, "the third time" that Jerusalem will be built, as say the Jews, namely, in the time of the king Messiah (r).

Coming down from God out of heaven] Which designs not the spiritual and heavenly original of the saints, being born from above, on which account

(e) Zohar in Gen. fol. 5. 2. vid. Kimchi in *Isaiah* lvi. 6.

(p) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. & Gloss. in *Ibid.* Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1. Tzeret Hammor, fol. 150. 2. (q) Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

(r) Zohar in Gen. fol. 126. 4.

count the church is called the heavenly Jerusalem; but a local descent of all the saints with Christ from the third heaven into the air, where they will be met by living saints; and their bodies being raised and united to their souls, they will reign with Christ in the new earth: and this is "the building which the Jews say God will prepare for the Jerusalem which is above, *מבנה*, "to descend into (1)."

Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband] Christ is the husband, or bridegroom, and the church is his spouse, and bride; and in these characters they will both appear at this time, when the marriage between them will be consummated: and the church may be said to be *prepared* as such, when all the elect of God are gathered in, the number of the saints is perfected; when the good work of grace is finished in them all, and they are all arrayed in the righteousness of Christ: and to be *adorned*, when not only they are clothed with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, and are beautified with the graces of the Spirit, but also with the bright robe of immortality and glory. The phrase is Jewish, and is to be read exactly as here in the book of Zohar (1).

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and he shall be their God*.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven] Either of an angel, or rather of Christ, or God himself; since the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, "out of the throne,"

Saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men] In allusion to the tabernacle being with the Israelites, and the Shechinah, or divine majesty, being in the midst of them, and as an accomplishment of the promise in *Ezek. xxxvii. 27.* in the fullest sense of it; and designs something distinct from the spiritual presence of Christ in his church, as his tabernacle and temple, and in the hearts of his people; and from the heavenly glory, or ultimate state of happiness, in which they will be *with him*, and that not as in a tabernacle, but as in a city, which has foundations: the phrase seems to denote the personal presence of Christ with his saints in human nature, like, though different from that in the time of his humiliation; then he dwelt or tabernacled with men on earth, but it was in the form of a servant; but now he

will appear in a glorious body, and indeed in all his personal glory, and reign among them as their king.

And he will dwell with them] In person, and not by his Spirit, or by faith, as before, nor as a wayfaring man only for a night: but he will dwell with them for the space of a thousand years, and after that for ever: Christ and his church will now be come together as husband and wife.

And they shall be his people] That is, they shall appear, to be his covenant people, that will be out of all doubt; this is made manifest in some measure in effectual vocation; but it does not yet appear neither to the saints themselves, nor to others, what they are, and shall be; but now it will be evident and unquestionable.

And God himself shall be with them] The Immanuel, God with us; not by his Spirit, as he was after his ascension to heaven, and since is; but in person, he himself will descend from heaven, when his church, the new Jerusalem does; the Lord their God will come in person with all the saints, and will be king over all the earth.

And he shall be their God] As Thomas styles him, *My Lord, and my God*, John xx. 28. The covenant of grace, with all its blessings and promises, are in him, and now will it have its full accomplishment; and the saints be in a state inexpressibly happy; see *Psal. cxliv. 15.*

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes] Occasioned by sin, Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive dispensations of providence; for these will be no more.

And there shall be no more death] Natural or violent; there will be no more putting of the saints to death, or persecution of them unto death, as in former times; nor will they die a natural death any more; these children of the resurrection, and inhabitants of the new heaven and earth, will be like the angels who die not; there will be no more like the angels who die not; there will be no more deadness as to spiritual things among the saints; and as for the second death, that will have no power over them. So the Jews say (2), *אין מיתה לעתיד לבוא*, "there is no death in the world."

(1) Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 4.

(2) Ibid. fol. 53. 2.

(2) Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 61. 2.

"world to come;" good is laid up for the righteous in the world to come, and with them is no death (x); and after the resurrection the body is perfect, and shall never after taste the taste of death (y).

Neither sorrow, nor crying] On account of sin, or because of oppression and persecution, or through the loss of near relations and friends; sorrow and sighing will flee away, all occasions thereof being gone.

Neither shall there be any more pain] Either of body or mind; there will be nothing to afflict the mind, and make that uneasy, but all the reverse; nor will there be any sickness or diseases of body, for the body will be raised glorious, powerful, incorruptible, and spiritual.

For the former things are passed away] Not only the first heaven and earth, the world, its fashion, and its lusts; but the former grievous times under Rome pagan and papal, and every thing which in this present life gives uneasiness and distress.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he that sat upon the throne, said] By whom is meant, either God the Father, who is often represented in this book as sitting on the throne, and as distinguished from Christ the Lamb; see chapters iv. 2. and v. 13. and vi. 16. and vii. 10. and who may seem the more to be intended, since he is by adopting grace the God and Father of his people, and they are his sons and daughters; or rather Christ, who not only is set down on the same throne with his Father, but has a throne of his own, called the throne of the Lamb, and was seen upon one by John in the preceding vision, chapter xx. 11. which though in order of time will be after this, yet in the order of the visions was seen before; and especially since the person on the throne speaking, calls himself the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, as Christ does in chapter i. 8. and seeing he it is that gives to thirsty souls of the water of life, John vii. 37, 38. and makes promises to the overcomer so largely and frequently in chapters ii. and iii. He addresses John, and delivers the following things to him,

Behold, I make all things new] Which is to be understood not of the renovation of persons at

conversion, when a new heart and spirit are given, and men are made wholly new creatures; for this is the work of the Spirit, and which is done daily, and is not peculiar to any particular period of time; nor of the renewing of the church-state at the beginning of the Gospel, when the Jewish church-state and ordinances waxed old, and vanished away, and a new covenant took place, a new and living way was opened, and new ordinances appointed, since all this was before John had this vision; nor was there any need of it to represent it to him; but of the making of the new heaven, and the new earth, which Christ ascribes to himself, and of his forming his church anew, making it a new Jerusalem, bestowing new glories upon his people, both in soul and body, and so presenting them to himself a glorious church; and of the new administration of his kingdom in a very singular and glorious manner, so that it respects a new people, a new habitation, and a new manner of ruling over them; all which is his own doing, and is marvellous; and because it is a matter of great importance, and is wonderful and certain, therefore a *behold* is prefixed to it; see *Isaiah* xliii. 19. The Jews say (z), that the holy blessed God will make ten things new in the future state, or world to come; the first is, he will enlighten the world, see *Y.* 11, 23. the second is, he will bring living water out of Jerusalem, see *Y.* 6. the third is, he will make trees to bring forth their fruit every month, see chapter xxii. 2. and the fourth is, all the waste places shall be built, even Sodom and Gomorrah; the fifth is, Jerusalem shall be built with sapphire stone, see *Y.* 19. the sixth is, the cow and the bear shall feed; the seventh is, a covenant shall be made between Israel, and the beasts, fowls, and creeping things; the eighth is, there shall be no more weeping and howling in the world; the ninth is, there shall be no more death in the world; the tenth is, there shall no more be fighting, and groaning, and sorrow in the world; see *Y.* 4.

And he said unto me, Write] What John had seen, and Christ had said, and was about to say; and particularly what concerned the renewing of all things, the whole being a matter of moment, and worth noting and taking down in writing, that it might be on record for saints to read, and receive comfort and advantage from; and to denote the certainty of it, as well as to shew, that it was a clear point, and to be known, whereas, when it was otherwise, he was bid not to write;

(x) Maimon. Teshuvah, c. 8. §. 1.
in Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 1.

(y) Midrash Hanneelam

(z) Shemot Rabba, §. 15. fol. 201. 3.

see chapters i. 11, 19. and xiv. 13. and xix. 9. and x. 4.

For these words are true and faithful] Both what he had said, and was about to say; they were *true*, because they came from God, who cannot lie, and *faithful*, because they would be punctually and exactly fulfilled; see chap. xix. 9. The Syriac version adds, "they are God's," and so the Arabic version.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

And he said unto me, It is done] The end of all things is come; it is all over with the first heaven and earth; these are no more, and the new heaven and earth are finished: there seems to be an allusion to the old creation, *he spake, and it was done*, Psalm xxxiii. 9. The whole election of grace is completed; every individual vessel of mercy is called by grace; all the saints are brought with Christ, and their bodies raised, and living saints changed, and altogether are as a bride prepared for her husband; and the nuptials are now solemnized; all the promises and prophecies relating to the glorious state of the church are now fulfilled; the mystery of God, spoken by his servants, is finished; the kingdom of Christ is compleat, and all other kingdoms are destroyed; the day of redemption is come; the salvation of the saints is perfect; what was finished on the cross, by way of impetration, is now done as to application; all are saved with an everlasting salvation.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end] Which are expressive of the primacy, perfection, and eternity of Christ; of his being the sum and substance, the first cause, and last end of all things, relating both to the old and new world, to things temporal and spiritual; see the note on chapter i. 8.

I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely] He that is *athirst* is one that is so not in a natural, much less in a sinful, but in a spiritual sense; who as he has thirsted after Christ, and salvation by him; after pardon of sin, and a justifying righteousness; after communion with Christ, and conformity to him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; so after the glories of his kingdom, and the happiness of a future state: to such an one Christ promises to give such large measures of grace and glory, and in such abundance, as will continue to refresh

and delight, and as may be compared to a fountain of living water, namely, for refreshment, abundance, and continuance; and all this he will give *freely*, without money, and without price; for as pardon and righteousness, and the whole of salvation, are all of free grace, so are all the enjoyments of the kingdom-state, the riches, honours, and glories of it, and eternal life itself; also plentifully, and in great abundance, and answers to the Hebrew word *מן*; see Numbers xi. 5.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

He that overcometh] All spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, the antichristian beast, his image, mark and number of his name; who is more than a conqueror through Christ; one that perseveres to the end, notwithstanding all temptations, trials, and difficulties; see the note on chapter ii. 7.

Shall inherit all things] The kingdom of Christ in the new Jerusalem state, and all things in it; heaven, eternal glory and happiness, and everlasting salvation; yea, God himself, who is the portion, and exceeding great reward of his people, and will be all in all. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "these things;" the new heaven, and new earth, the presence of God with men, freedom from all evils, and divine refreshments from the fountain of living water, before mentioned.

And I will be his God, and he shall be my son] Christ is not only concerned in predestination to the adoption of children, in making way by redemption for the enjoyment of this blessing, and in the actual donation of it; but he himself, who is the mighty God, is the everlasting Father, and his people are his spiritual seed and offspring, and in his kingdom he will see his seed, and prolong his days; he will long enjoy them, and present them to himself, and afterwards to his Father, saying as in Heb. ii. 13. and though they are now, in the present state of things, the sons of God, yet it does not appear so manifest that they are, or at least what they shall be; but in this new and glorious state of things, it will be abundantly manifest, that they are the sons of God, and seed of Christ; and it will be known how glorious they are, and shall be, when they shall see Christ in his glory, and be like him; who will now be, *אבנא דעולם*, "the father of the world to come," as the Septuagint render the phrase in Isaiah ix. 6.

8 But

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

But the fearful] Not the timorous sheep and lambs of Christ, the dear children of God, who are sometimes of a fearful heart, on account of sin, temptation, and unbelief; but such who are of cowardly spirits, and are not valiant for the truth, but who through fear of men, either make no profession of Christ, and his Gospel, or having made it, drop it, lest they should be exposed to tribulation and persecution: these are they that are afraid of the beast, and live in servile bondage to him.

And unbelieving] Meaning not merely atheists, who do not believe there is a God, or deists only, that do not believe in Christ; but such who profess his name, and are called by it, and yet do not truly believe in him, nor embrace his Gospel, and the truths of it, but believe a lie; these are condemned already, and on them the wrath of God abides, and they will be damned at last; though it may have a regard to such also who are infidels as to the second coming of Christ to judgment, and who are scoffers and mockers at it.

And the abominable] Every sinful man is so in the sight of God; but here it denotes such who are the worst of sinners, given up to sinning; who are abominable, and to every good work reprobate; who are addicted to the worst of crimes, as were the Sodomites and others; the Ethiopic version renders it, "who pollute themselves" with unnatural lusts. The Syriac and Arabic versions express it by two words, "sinners and "polluted," filthy sinners; the character well agrees with Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, and to all that adhere to her, and join with her in her abominable idolatries.

And murderers] Of the saints, and prophets, and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood Babylon, or the whore of Rome has made herself drunk, and in whom it will be found.

And whoremongers] All unclean persons, that indulge themselves in impure lusts, in fornication, adultery, and all lewdness; as the clergy of the church of Rome, who being forbidden to marry, and being under a vow of celibacy, and making great pretensions to chastity, and singular holiness, give up themselves to all lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

And forcerers] Conjurers, dealers with familiar spirits, necromancers, and such as use the magic art, as many of the popes did to get into the chair, and poisoners of kings and princes; whoredoms and witchcrafts go together sometimes, as they did in Jezebel, an emblem of the Romish antichrist.

And idolaters] That worship devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, representing God, and Christ, and the virgin Mary, and saints departed, chap. ix. 20.

And all liars] In common, and particularly such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of the man of sin, and who are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; all lies being of the devil, and abominable to God. All and each of these

Shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone] The Jews (a) speak of several distinct places in hell, for several sorts of sinners, as particularly for sabbath-breakers, adulterers, and liars; and say of the wicked, that when he is condemned, he shall take, חלקו, "his part" in hell (b); see the note on chapter xix. 20.

Which is the second death] See the note on chap. ii. 11.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels] Either the first of them, as one of the four beasts is the first of them, chapter vi. 1. or it may be the last, and very likely the same as in chapter xvii. 1.

Which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues] That is, the wrath of God poured out by them on the antichristian party; see chapters xv. 1, 7. and xvi. 1.

And talked with me, saying, Come hither] See chapter xvii. 1.

I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife] The Lamb is Christ, who is often so called in this book; see chapters v. 6, 7, 9. and xiv. 1. and xiii. 8. and xxi. 23. and vii. 17. and xix. 7. and is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the maker and governor of the universe, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and who, as mediator, has all accomplishments and qualifications to recommend

(a) Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

(b) T. Bab. Chagga, fol. 15. 1.

commend him as a bridegroom, such as beauty, riches, and wisdom: the *bride*, his *wife*, is not any particular believer, nor any particular church; not the Gentile church, nor the Jewish church only, but all the elect of God, consisting of the raised and living saints, at the coming of Christ; who will make up one body, one general assembly, and be as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband: these were first betrothed to Christ in eternity, and were openly espoused by him, one by one, at conversion; and now being all gathered in by effectual vocation, the dead being raised, and the living changed, and all glorified, the marriage is consummated, and they are declared publicly to be the bride, the Lamb's wife; see the note on *Matt.* xxii. 2. And now, though John had had a sight of her before, *ŷ.* 2. yet that was but a glimmering one, at a distance, he being in the wilderness, chap. xvii. 3. wherefore the angel calls him to him, and proposes to give him a clear, distinct, and particular view of her, in all her glory; and a glorious sight this indeed! to see the bride brought to the king in raiment of needle-work, and the queen stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir. This is a sight of a quite different nature from that of the filthy strumpet, which the same angel proposed to give to John in chapter xvii. 1.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

And he carried me away in the spirit] John was in an ecstasy, as in chapters i. 10. and iv. 2. and xvii. 3. and in the thoughts and apprehensions of his mind and spirit, it seemed to him as if he was carried away from one place to another; for this was not a corporal sight, nor were any of the visions he had, but what was represented to his mind or spirit; it being with him, as it was with the apostle Paul, when he was caught up to the third heaven, who knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the Spirit brought me;" not the evil spirit Satan, who took up our Lord corporally, and carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, *Matt.* iv. 8. but either a good angel, or the Spirit of God.

To a great and high mountain] To such an one was Ezekiel brought in the visions of God, when the frame of a city and temple was shown him, with their dimensions, *Ezek.* xl. 2. as here, a city is shown to John, with its wall, gates, foundations, and their measures: and he was brought

to such a place, partly that he might have the more plain and full view of it; and partly to suggest unto him, that now the church of Christ was established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and was a city on a hill, which could not be hid, *Isaiah* ii. 2.

And shewed me that great city] Which is no other than the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; just as the apostate church, all along in this book before, is called the great city, chapters xi. 8. and xiv. 8. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10, 16, 18. but now that being demolished, there is no other great city in being, but the church of Christ, called a city before; see *ŷ.* 2. here a great one, not only because of its prodigious large dimensions, *ŷ.* 16. but because of the number of its inhabitants, being such as no man can number; and because it is the residence of the great king, the tabernacle of God will be in it; though this epithet is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions.

The holy Jerusalem] Called *the new Jerusalem*, *ŷ.* 2. here *holy*, in allusion to the city of Jerusalem, which was called the holy city, *Matt.* iv. 5. on account of the temple in it, the place of divine worship, but here this city is so called, because it is the residence of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, inhabited only by holy men, made perfectly so, and encompassed by holy angels.

Descending out of heaven from God] As in *ŷ.* 2. see the note there.

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

Having the glory of God] Not only upon their souls, which will lie in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, the bride's wedding garment being on them, in the perfect holiness, which will be in them, and in that complete knowledge of all spiritual and heavenly things they will be possessed of, for they will have a glory revealed in them; but upon their bodies also, for this city, the church, the bride of Christ, will consist only of risen and changed saints, whose bodies will be freed from all dishonour, deformity, diseases, and imperfections, and will be made like unto Christ's glorious body, and will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God. Moreover, the presence of God may be intended by his glory, as the Shechinah, or the divine majesty of God in the tabernacle and temple, was called, *Exodus* xl. 35. *1 Kings* viii. 11. for the glorious presence of God will now be in this church-state, which will cast a lustre on all that are in it; for if the face

face of Moses, and of Stephen, shone so bright and glorious, through the presence of God with them; see 2 Cor. iii. 7. Acts vi. 15. how much more gloriously will the saints shine in this state, when they shall enjoy the presence of God in a far more illustrious manner? to which may be added, that Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, will now appear in that, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels; and all the saints will appear with him in glory; and to see them in all this glory, is a glorious sight indeed!

And her light was like unto a stone most precious] By her light is not meant the light she will have in her, though that will be exceeding great, but the fountain of it from whence it comes; that which holds it forth to her, and supplies her with it: the word *pharos*, signifies an illuminator, and is used of the ministers of the Gospel, that hold forth the word of life and light to others, Phil. ii. 15, 16. but here it intends Christ, who is the sun of righteousness the church's light or enlightner, Ps. 23. not with the light of nature, as he enlightens every man, nor with the light of grace, with which the saints are enlightened by him in the present state of things, by his Spirit, through the word and ordinances, but with the light of glory: and he is comparable to the most precious stone; he is more precious than rubies; he is so now to them that believe, in his person, offices, grace, and righteousness, and will be more so in his light and glory in the new Jerusalem state.

Even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal] God the Father, who sits on the throne, is said to be to look upon like a *jasper*, chap. iv. 2. see the note there; and here Christ, the illuminator of his church, is said to be like one, because of the exceeding brightness of this stone, and the durability of it, expressive of the perpetuity of Christ, as the light of his church and people; he is the everlasting light of it, *Isaiah* lx. 19, 20. and he is compared to the crystallizing *jasper*. There is one sort which is called *Aerizusa*, like to air (e), and another *ChrySTALLIZUSA* (d), clear as crystal. So Pliny speaks (e) of a white *jasper* called *Astrios*, and which, he says, is *crystallo propinquans*, "near to crystal," found in India, and on the shores of Pallene. To this Christ is like, because he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, and will cause an everlasting day; and such a clear and bright state of things, as that there will be no night, nor any more darkness, nothing but everlasting joy, peace, prosperity, and happiness; there seems to be some reference to *Isaiah* lx. 1, 19, 20.

(e) *Rozon de Gemmis*, l. 2. c. 1.

(c) *Nat. Hist.* l. 37. c. 9.

(d) *Dioscorides*, l. 5.

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

And had a wall great and high] Not the Spirit of God, who separates, sanctifies, and preserves the saints, as Cocceius thinks, for this account respects not the church militant; nor the eternal decree of God, the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell, which everlastingly fixes the state of man; for this regards not the ultimate state of happiness: many interpreters understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel, which as it secures the church now from heretics, and is like a wall very strong well-built, is durable and impregnable; and may be called *great*, because of the great author of it, and the great things contained in it; and *high*, since it is not to be reached by carnal minds; so none but such who have embraced it, shall enter into the new Jerusalem; for all liars, and forgers of doctrinal lies, and who embrace the antichristian lies, shall be without. Though rather the almighty power of God, which guards his church and people now, and will be their defence in this state, is meant; and which shows the state not to be that of the ultimate glory, which will need no wall, but this will; since an attempt will be made upon the saints in it, though it will be a foolish and fruitless one: and this wall of divine power is very great indeed, and is insuperable by men; God himself is a wall of fire about his people; though it may be best to interpret this of salvation itself, which is by Jesus Christ, if we compare with this text *Isaiah* xxvi. 1. and chap. lx. 18. for those, and those only who are interested in it, will dwell in the new Jerusalem; and salvation in this state will be enjoyed in its fulness; and this is very great in its author, objects, and matter, being wrought out by the great God, for great sinners, at a great expence, and including grace and glory, and not to be got over or enjoyed by those who have no interest in it.

And had twelve gates] Though, strictly speaking, there is but one gate, and that a strait one, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, regenerating and sanctifying grace; for as he is the only door into the sheepfold, the church, in its present state, or he only that has faith in him, has a right to enter there, and is the only way to heaven and eternal happiness; so he is the only gate into the new Jerusalem, or such only will be admitted there, who are interested in him: but these gates are said to be twelve, in allusion

allusion to the twelve apostles, who pointed out to men the way of salvation by Christ; and to the twelve tribes of Israel, who represent all the elect of God, who enter in thereat; and to the twelve gates of Ezekiel's city, *Ezek. xlviii. 31—35.*

And at the gates twelve angels] Meaning either the ministering spirits, in allusion to the cherubim in *Gen. iii. 24.* who are watchers, and encamp about the saints now, and will, as it were, stand centinels in this camp of the saints, as it is called, chap. xx. 8. and besides, will be made use of in gathering the saints from the several parts of the world, and introducing them into this state; or else the apostles and ministers of the word, often called angels in this book, who will shine with peculiar lustre now, and will appear at the head of the several companies they have been useful to, and bring them as their joy and crown of rejoicing into this glorious state: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac version. The Jews speak of שרי, "princes," being appointed over the gates of heaven, east, west, north, and south, with the keys in their hands, whose names they give us (f).

And names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel] Not literal, but mystical Israel, whom God has chosen to salvation, Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace; denoting that all, and each of these, have a right to enter into the new Jerusalem, and will be admitted there, and none but they. In like manner the Jews (g) make mention of a court of the Lord, "which has twelve gates, according to the computation of the tribes of Israel; on one gate is written Reuben, on another is written Simeon; and so all the tribes of Israel are written on those gates; in the time they go up to appear before the Lord of the world, who ever goes up to this gate, (on which the tribe of Reuben is written) if he is of the tribe of Reuben they open to him, (and receive him) if not they cast him without; and so of all whom they do not receive; they open to none but to him who is of that tribe, or whose name is written on the gate."

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

On the east three gates] On which were written the names of Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan.

(f) Raziell, fol. 35. 2.

(g) Zuhar in Num. fol. 70. 4.

On the north three gates] On which were written the names of Reuben, Judah, and Levi.

On the south three gates] On which were written the names of Simeon, Issachar, and Zabulon.

And on the west three gates] On which were written the names of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali; see *Ezek. xlviii. 31—34.* This denotes the collection of the saints from all parts of the world, who shall come from east, west, north, and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God; and therefore here are gates at every point to enter in at; see *Isaiah xliii. 5, 6. Luke xliii. 29.*

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations] Christ is the one and only foundation of his church and people, of the covenant of grace, and of salvation; and of faith, hope, peace, and joy, and of eternal happiness, and so of this glorious state of the church; he will be the light and temple of it, the glory and safety of it; he will be all in all in it; but because he has been ministerially laid as the foundation by the twelve apostles, for men to build their present and future happiness upon, therefore the foundations of the wall of salvation are said to be twelve; see *Eph. ii. 20.* Moreover, this may denote the firm and immovable state of the church at this time, it being a city which has foundations, or is well founded, *Heb. xi. 10.* with which compare *Isaiah xiv. 32.* and chap. xxviii. 16. Hence it follows,

And in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb] The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions read, "the twelve names of the twelve apostles;" the allusion seems to be to the inscribing of the names of builders on stones laid in the foundation, in memory of them; and so these wise master-builders will be had in everlasting remembrance.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

And he that talked with me] One of the seven angels, *y. 9.* for not a man is the measurer of this city, as in *Ezek. xl. 3.* nor John, as of the temple, chap. xi. 1. but an angel, the same that showed to John this great sight.

Had a golden reed] Not a common measuring reed, or rod, as in *Ezek. xl. 4. Rev. xiii. 1.* but one covered with gold, denoting the present glorious state of the church, being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

To measure the city] The new Jerusalem, its length and breadth; see *Zech. ii. 1, 2.* to show how exactly conformable this church-state will be to the rule of God's word, even to perfection.

And the gates thereof] To signify who had a right to enter into it, and who not.

And the wall thereof] Its height, it being exceeding high.

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

And the city lieth four-square] To the four corners of the world, from whence its inhabitants come, and denotes the regularity, uniformity, perfection, and immoveableness of it.

And the length is as large as the breadth] This church-state will be all of a piece, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing.

And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs] Or fifteen hundred miles; a monstrously large city indeed! such an one as never was upon earth; see *Ezek. xlviii. 35.* and which shows, that this is not to be understood literally, but mystically; and intends the capacity of it, here being room enough for all the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, for all the elect of God; for as in Christ's Father's house, so in this kingdom-state of his, there will be many mansions, or dwelling-places, enow for all his people. This city will hold them all. The Jews (*b*) say of Jerusalem, that in time to come it shall be so enlarged, as to reach to the gates of Damascus, yea, to the throne of glory.

The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal] A perfect uniform state! according to the Ethiopic version, it is in length twelve thousand furlongs, and every measure equal, so that it is so many furlongs in length, breadth, and height.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits] The root of which is twelve, for twelve times twelve is a hundred and forty-four; which number is mystical and apostolical, and suited to the perfect state of this church: hence twelve gates, and twelve angels at them, and the names of the twelve tribes on them; and

twelve foundations of the wall, and twelve thousand furlongs, the measure of the city.

According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel] Who talked with John, and measured the city, gates, and wall, and who appeared in the form of a man; and his reed might be, as some have supposed, the length of a man, six cubits; or six feet, as in *Ezek. xl. 5.* and may denote that this business requires the utmost wisdom and understanding of a man, and even of an angel, to look into, and find out: see chap. xiii. 18. and also may signify the angelic state of the saints at this time, when the children of the resurrection will be like the angels of God, for immortality and glory.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper] Which is expressive of the impregnableness, duration, brightness, and glory of salvation by Christ, the jasper being a very hard, durable, and bright stone; and salvation can never be made void, and of none effect; it will last for ever, and in this state will come forth as light, and as a lamp that burneth; it is represented by the same precious stone as God and Christ themselves are; see chapters iv. 21. and xxi. 11.

And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass] It was made or built of gold; its parts, buildings, houses, and palaces, were all of gold, and that the best; and it was like to transparent glass; that is, either the city, as most copies read, or the gold; for the Alexandrian copy reads *quasi*, and so the Vulgate Latin version: the gold of which it was, is different from common gold: and as this city, the new Jerusalem, designs the saints, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, the inhabitants of the new earth; this denotes the solidity, excellency, and preciousness of them, the rich and happy state they will be in, as well as their purity and freedom from all sin and corruption, and the clear knowledge of things they themselves will have, and others will have of them; their hearts and actions will be open to all; nor will this gold have any rust upon it any more, or ever be changed, and become dim.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

And the foundations of the wall of the city] Which were twelve; see *2. 14.*

(b) Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1.

Were garnished with all manner of precious stones] See *Isaiah* liv. 11, 12. not that there were all manner of precious stones in every foundation, but in them all there were, and each foundation had its stone peculiar to it, as follows; and which are not applicable to the persons of the apostles, who were not the foundations, but on them their names only were written: and besides, the order of them, as given in the Evangelists and Acts of the Apostles, is not certain, and always the same, to which these several stones may be adjusted; though they are doubtless comparable to them for their preciousness in the sight of God, and Christ, and all the saints; and for the brightness and purity of their doctrine and lives; and for their zeal in the cause of Christ; and for their solidity, and invincible courage and constancy: much less are these precious stones applicable to a set of ministers in the latter day, who are to be useful in the conversion of the Jews in the several parts of the world, where these stones are found, as Brightman thinks, but to Jesus Christ, the one and only foundation: and without entering into the particular virtues and excellencies of these stones, in general, they set forth the worth and preciousness of Christ, who is the pearl of great price; the pleasure and delight had in viewing his excellencies and perfections; his brightness, purity, and glory, and his firmness and durability, as a foundation. There may be some allusion to the twelve stones in the breast-plate of the high-priest, on which the names of the tribes of Israel were written (1).

The first foundation was jasper] It was laid with a jasper stone, of which see chap. iv. 3. On this stone, in the breast-plate, Benjamin's name was written.

The second sapphire] Its colour is azure, or sky-blue; it is transparent, and exceeding hard. Schroder says there are very good ones found in the borders of Bohemia and Silesia; but those which are brought from Pegu are most valuable; on this stone Issachar's name was engraven.

The third a chalcedony] It is of a misty grey colour, clouded with blue, yellow, or purple; the best is that which has a pale cast of blue; it is very much like the common agate; and the Hebrew word, כרדום, *Cardod*, is rendered agate in *Isaiah* liv. 12, though it is thought to answer to the carbuncle in the breast-plate, on which was written the name of Levi. And Pliny (2) speaks of carbuncles, called *Charcedonites*, which R. Leo

Mutinenfis says (1) had their name in memory of the city of Carthage. There is a precious stone mentioned in the Targum of Jonathan, called כרדון, *Cadcodin*, which answers to the diamond in the breast-plate, on which Zabulon's name was written; and in the Jerusalem Targum it is called כרדנא, *Cadcedana*, and answers to the emerald, which had Judah's name on it, and seems to be put for *Chalcedin* and *Chalcedana*, which agrees with the name of this stone.

The fourth an emerald] Of which see chap. iv. 3. The best of this sort are the eastern ones. Schroder says (m), they are found in Cyprus, Britain, and other places, but not so good as the rest. On this stone Judah's name was written.

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

The fifth, sardonyx] Which is partly of the sardian, and partly of the onyx stone, which resembles a man's nail, from whence it has its name; it is reddish, bordering on white; it may be thought to answer to the onyx in the breast-plate, on which was written the name of Joseph.

The sixth, sardius] The same with the sardine stone, chap. iv. 3. of a blood colour, and what is commonly called a *cornelian*: it is found in Sardinia, from whence it has its name, and in Bohemia and Silesia, though those of Babylon are the best. This was Reuben's stone.

The seventh, chrysolite] A stone of a dusky green colour, with a cast of yellow; by its name it should have the colour of gold. Schroder says, it is found in Bohemia, and that it is the same the moderns call the topaz. Some think it answers to Tarshish in the breast-plate, rendered Beryl, on which was the name of Asher.

The eighth, beryl] A stone of a pale green colour, thought to be the diamond of the ancients; it may answer to the *Ligure* in the breast-plate, which the Targum on *Cant.* v. 14. calls *Birla*, and had the name of Dan on it.

The ninth, a topaz] A stone very hard and transparent, of a beautiful yellow, or gold colour: the topaz of Ethiopia was counted the best, *Job* xxviii. 19. Some say it is so called from the island Topazus; on this stone Simeon's name was engraven.

77

(1) Vid. Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxviii. 17. Targum in Cant. v. 14. Shemot Rabba, §. 38. fol. 138. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 178. 3.

(2) Nat Hist. l. 37. c. 7.

(1) Shilte Hagibborim, fol. 45. 4. (2) Pharnacopeia, l. 3. c. 3. p. 12.

The tenth, a chrysoprasus] A stone of a green colour, inclining to that of gold, from whence it has its name; for this is the agate in the breast-plate, which was Naphtali's stone.

The eleventh, a jacinth] Or *hyacinth*; a stone of a purple, or violet colour, from whence it has its name; though what the moderns so call is of a deep reddish yellow, pretty near a flame colour. Zabulon's stone was the diamond.

The twelfth, an amethyst] A stone of a violet colour, bordering on purple: it has been thought a preservative from drunkenness, from whence it seems to have its name. On this stone was written the name of Gad. Agreeable to this account of John's, the Jews speak (*n*) of the tabernacle above, being built on twelve precious stones; and sometimes they say (*o*), that the holy blessed God will found Jerusalem with ten kind of precious stones, and which they mention, and several of which are the same with these.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls] Denoting the purity and preciousness of Christ, by whom the saints enter, and of the saints who enter in thereat, as well as of the place into which they enter.

Every several gate was of one pearl] The pearl of great price, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only gate, door, and way into this happy state: this shows that this account cannot be taken literally, but mystically, for no such pearl was ever known, large enough to make a gate of. "Those of the largest size, that have been known, are that of Cleopatra, valued by Pliny at centies HS, or at 80000 pound sterling; and that brought in 1574 to Philip the second, of the size of a pigeon's egg, worth 14400 ducats; and that of the emperor Rudolph, mentioned by Boetius, called *la peregrina*, or the incomparable, of the size of a muscade pear, and weighing 30 carats; and that mentioned by Tavernier, in the hands of the emperor of Persia in 1633, bought of an Arab for 72000 tomans, which at three pounds nine shillings the toman, amounts to 110400 pounds sterling (*p*). But what is one of these pearls to make a gate of, for a wall which was an hundred and forty-four cubits high? *y*. 17. The Jews

say (*q*), that the holy blessed God will bring precious stones and pearls of thirty cubits by thirty, &c. and place them in the gates of Jerusalem, as it is said, *Isaiah* liv. 12. which must be understood also, not in a literal but mystical sense: and L'Empereur (*r*) makes mention of an ancient commentary on *Psalms* lxxxvii. 1. which says, that the holy blessed God will make a gate at the east (of the temple), and in it two doors, each of one pearl. So R. Joshua ben Levi says (*s*), that there are in paradise two gates of agates or diamonds; some render the word rubies.

And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass] Denoting the preciousness and delightfulness of the saints conversation one with another; and the purity and cleanness of it, there being no mire and filth of sin in these streets; and the sincerity and openness of it, each one walking in his uprightness; which will be seen and known of all, as clearly as any thing can be beheld in a transparent glass. So the Jews say (*t*) of paradise, that the ground is paved with precious stones, the lustre of which may be compared to the light of burning torches.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

And I saw no temple therein] No material temple, as was in the old Jerusalem, or such as is described in Ezekiel's vision; nor any place of public worship, as under the Gospel dispensation; for in this state there will be no such external form of worship, as now, such as preaching the word, and administering ordinances. The Jews expect a third temple, but in vain.

For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it] God will be immediately present with his people, whose face they shall see, and whom they will serve in the most pure and spiritual manner; and Christ in his human nature, in the temple of his body, that tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, and in which the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, will be the only medium of the divine presence, and of the communications of glory to men, and of the saints praise to God, which will be the service they will be employed in; and the Lamb being joined with the Lord God Almighty, shews his deity and his equality with his Father.

23 And

(*o*) Zohar in Gen. fol. 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 65. 4.

(*p*) Abkath Reel, p. 150. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 96. 3.

(*q*) Chambers's Cyclopædia in the word pearl.

(*q*) T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. & Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 54. 1. (*r*) Mifn. Middot, c. 4. §. 2. Vid. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 1. (*s*) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. (*t*) Sopher Avedah Hakkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it.] Which may be understood either literally of these two luminaries, which all earthly cities need; and which, though they may be in being in the new heavens, yet will not have the use with respect to this city, they now have. The Jews say (u), the orb of the sun is in this world; and the Gloss adds, but not in the future state, for the lights shall be renewed; and they further say (w), as here, that "in the world to come, Israel, אֵין צורך לאור הַחַמָּה," "will have no need of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon," neither by day nor "by night," as they say (x) the Israelites had not in the wilderness. So they represent the Lord speaking to Moses, and saying (y), "thy days shall cease, but thy light shall not cease; for thou shalt have no need for ever of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon, and of the stars." Or else it may be understood mystically, but not of Christ, the sun of righteousness, whom the saints will always need and enjoy; but of the governors and discipline of the church in its present state; and of the written word, which is a light unto them now, and the ministration of it, and the ordinances of the Gospel, by which light and knowledge are conveyed; but in this state all will be immediately taught of God; nor shall every one teach his neighbour, but all shall know the Lord perfectly; and also of political governors, who will be no more; see 1 Cor. xv. 24.

For the glory of God did lighten it.] The *Shekinah*, or glorious presence of God, which filled the temple of Solomon, and shone round about the shepherds at the incarnation of Christ; with the presence of God, who is light itself, which will be enjoyed in a much more glorious manner, will the church now be enlightened; and this will be an everlasting light unto her.

And the Lamb is the light thereof.] In whose light they will see the face of God, and see God face to face; they will see Christ as he is, and behold his glory, and look upon the angels, those glorious forms of light, and all the glorified saints, and know and converse with each other; and they will look into, and clearly discern all the mysteries and doctrines of grace, and all the va-

rious scenes of providence, which will all be opened and laid before them. And this light will be always without any change and variation; which is no small part of the commendation of this city, which is the inheritance of the saints in light. So the holy blessed God is said by the Jews (z) to be, אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁל אֵינֶנּוּ, "the light of Jerusalem;" he is the light of the new Jerusalem; see *Isaiah* lx. 19, 20. and the light of the world to come is, by them (a), called, "the great light."

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

And the nations of them which are saved.] In distinction from them that will be deceived by Satan, chap. xx. 8. These are not all the nations of the world, which will be gathered before Christ, the judge, for all will not be saved, there is a world that will be condemned; nor the Gentiles only, which shall come into the church-state of the Jews when called, for that state is not here designed, and besides, all Israel shall be saved then; nor the living saints at Christ's coming, who shall have escaped, and are saved from the general conflagration; for these, with the raised ones, will be caught up together to Christ, and descend and dwell together on earth, and make one church-state; but all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles, whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit has called out of all the nations of the earth: these are only saved ones; such are already saved, not only are determined to be saved, and for whom salvation is wrought out by Christ, and to whom it is applied at conversion, and who are representatively set down in heavenly places in Christ, and are already saved by hope and faith; and with respect to the certainty of salvation; all which may be said of saints in the present state: but these will be such, who will be actually and personally saved, will be in the full possession of salvation, enjoying all the blessings of it; they will be partakers of the first resurrection, and the glories of it; the tabernacle of God will be with them; they will be free from all sorrows and death, and will inherit all things: the Syriac version reads, "the nations that are saved;" who are redeemed and saved by Christ: this may teach us how to understand those phrases, which seem to favour general redemption, as all men;

(u) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 2.

(w) Rashi, fol. 17. 2.

(x) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 57. 2.

(y) Petirat Mosheh, fol. 23. 2.

(z) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 57. 2. & 98. 1.

(a) See Gerson and Aben Ezra in Pidem xlii. 19.

men, the world, the whole world; see *Isaiah* xlv. 20. and chap. lxvii. 19. These words, of them which are saved, are left out in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, but are in all the copies. These nations are the inhabitants of this city, and they shall

Shall walk in the light of it] Which is Christ; they shall enjoy it; they shall have the light of life, and be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, and that continually; they shall not only come to it, but continue in it, and walk at it, and by the light of it; the walk of these will be different from the walk of saints now, who walk by faith, and not by sight; but these shall walk by sight, enjoying the beatific vision of God, and the Lamb. The Jews say (b), that Jerusalem, in time to come, will be made a lamp to the nations of the world, *וְהָיָה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְנֵר לְאֻמִּים*, "and they shall walk in its light," or by the light of it, which is the sense of *Isaiah* lx. 3, *the Gentiles shall come to thy light*; see *Isaiah* lx. 1, 3.

And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it] By whom may be meant either mystically all the saints, who will be kings as well as priests unto God, and will reign as such with Christ in this state, will cast their crowns at his feet, and give him all the honour and glory; or literally, the kings of the earth, who shall have relinquished antichrist, hated the whore, and burnt her with fire, and who will have been nursing fathers in the spiritual reign; or rather all good kings that ever have been in the earth: not that they will be kings of the earth at this time, for now all rule, authority, and power will be put down; nor will any worldly riches, honour, and glory, be brought by them into this state, nor will they be needed in it; but it is to be understood of such who have been kings on earth, though not of their having brought earthly riches and grandeur into the interest and churches of Christ; as David gave much toward the building of the temple, which was begun and finished by king Solomon his son, and as Constantine greatly enriched and aggrandized the church when he became emperor; but the sense seems to be this, that such who have been christian kings on earth will prefer the happiness of this state to all their riches and greatness here; and that could all the glory of the kings of the earth be put together, it would not equal, but be greatly inferior to the glory of the new Jerusalem; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the inhabitants of this place; see chap. xx. 6. besides, these shall do all homage, and submit to Christ the King of

kings in the midst of the church, which may be meant by glory and honour.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day] Which does not design the free communication between the living saints on the new earth, and the raised ones in the new heaven, as some have thought, for these shall be together, and make up one body; but rather the universal collection, and free admission of all the saints from all parts into this city; though it seems best to interpret it of the safety of the inhabitants; see *Jer.* xlix. 31. who will have no enemy to fear, and therefore need never shut their gates; the beast and false prophet will have been taken, and cast into the lake of fire long ago; ungodly men will be destroyed in the general conflagration, and Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during the thousand years.

For there shall be no night there] This is a reason given why it is before said, the gates shall not be shut by day, since it is unusual to shut gates in the day, unless in time of war, because there will be no night in this city, and so no need of ever shutting the gates; the night time being the season for thieves and robbers, and for enemies to make their incursions, and to surprize: but here will be no night; either literally, times and seasons, as measured by the revolutions of the sun and moon, will be no more, they will not have the use they have; at least this city will stand in no need of them. The Jews say (c), that the world to come will be *כָּל הַיּוֹם*, "all day;" or mystically and figuratively, there will be no night of spiritual darkness and desertion, of drowsiness, sleepiness, and inactivity, of error and heresy, or of calamity and distress of any kind; all which are sometimes signified by night in scripture; see *Cant.* iii. 1. *Matt.* xxv. 5, 6. *Isaiah* xxvi. 9.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

The glory of the nations are the people of God, who, though they are reckoned the filth of the world, are the excellent in the earth; these will be brought into this city, and be presented to the king of it, in a glorious manner, and that by the kings of the earth; either such who have been ecclesiastical rulers over them, who will introduce them as their joy and crown of rejoicing; or who have been political governors of them, their fathers

(b) Yalkut Simon, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

(c) Bereshit Rabba, §. 91. fol. 79. 4.

and protectors; or the sense is as before, that whatever is great and glorious in the nations of the world, will be counted as nothing in comparison of the glory and magnificence of this state, and not to be mentioned with it: the Arabic version renders it, "the nations shall bring glory and honour to it;" in the sense before given.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth] As evil thoughts, words, and actions do; and therefore he that enters into this city must be free from all these: or "that is defiled," as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; or "that is unclean," as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; alluding to the tabernacle and temple, into which no unclean person might come; see *Isaiah* lii. 1. No profane sinner, whose mind and conscience are defiled, and whose conversation is defiling, may enter here; nor any self-righteous person, whose righteousness is as filthy rags, and he himself is as an unclean thing, shall be admitted here; only such who are washed in the blood of Christ, and have on his righteousness, and so are without spot or wrinkle; which shows the pure and perfect state of this church, and therefore cannot design any state of the church previous to the coming of Christ and the first resurrection.

Neither whatsoever worketh abomination] Commits sin, which is abominable in the sight of God, lives and dies in a course of wickedness; or particularly is guilty of idolatry, either makes idols, or serves them, or both, which are an abomination to the Lord; see *1 Kings* xi. 7.

Or maketh a lie] Any lie in general; who is a common liar, loves and invents a lie, and speaks one; believes that which is false with an intent to deceive; or in particular, who embraces and propagates antichristian lies, doctrinal ones, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such shall be damned; see *1 Tim.* iv. 1, 2 *Thess.* ii. 11, 12.

But they which are written in the Lamb's book of life] Who are predestinated to eternal life; and though they are naturally, and in themselves defiled and sinful creatures, yet they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit, and so are made meet and fit to enter this city; see the note on chap. xiii. 8. It is by the Jews observed (d), that "the Jerusalem of the

world to come is not as the Jerusalem of this world; the Jerusalem of this world; whoever would go up to it (or enter into it) might; but that of the world to come, *לֹא יָמוֹנָהּ* *לֵבָרָא* *יִשְׂרָאֵל*, "none may go up to it (or enter into it) but those who are prepared, or appointed for it."

CHAP. XXII.

This chapter contains a further account of the above city, a confirmation of the visions of this book, and the conclusion of it. The city is further described by the river that ran by it, or through it, called a river of water of life, said to be pure and clear as crystal, and to have its rise from the throne of God and the Lamb; and by the tree of life in the midst of it, situated on each side the river, bearing twelve sorts of fruit, yielded every month, the leaves of which heal the nations, *ch.* 1, 2, and the happiness of the inhabitants of it is set forth, by there being no curse in it; by the throne of God and the Lamb being in it; by the service of the saints in it; by the pleasure they enjoy, and the honour put upon them; by the light of the place, and the duration of the saints reign, *ch.* 3—5. next follow testimonies concerning the authority of the book, and the truth of things in it; and first, the testimony of the angel that talked with John, declaring that the things in it were true and faithful; and that he was sent from the Lord God of the prophets to shew to the saints things that would quickly come to pass; and that Christ himself would quickly come; and that they were happy who kept and observed the sayings and prophecies of it, *ch.* 6, 7. then the testimony of John who saw and heard them, and was about to worship the angel that declared them, but was forbid by him, and dissuaded from it, by observing to him who he was, a fellow-servant of his and of his brethren, and that God only was to be worshipped, *ch.* 8, 9. who is ordered, as it seems by Christ, not to seal up the prophecies delivered to him, since the time of their fulfillment was at hand, when men would remain just as they were, whether ungodly and filthy, or righteous and holy, *ch.* 10, 11. and who declares that he should quickly come to reward every man according to his works; and that he was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and that they were happy that did his commandments, since it would appear they had a right to the tree of life, and to entrance through the gates into the city before described, when wicked men,

(d) T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. a.

men, whose characters are given, would be without, *ch.* 12—15, and still more clearly and fully Christ asserts himself to be the author of this revelation, and the sender of the angel, to testify it to the church, who is David's root and offspring, and the morning-star, whose coming is to be wished for by the spirit and bride; and every truly gracious soul, *ch.* 16, 17, and to show the perfection and authority of this book, as well as of the whole scripture, and to deter persons from adding to it, or taking from it, he threatens to inflict on such persons the plagues herein written, and to take the names of such out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book, *ch.* 18, 19, and then he delivers out a fresh asseveration of his speedy coming, to which John adds his hearty *Amen*, and earnest request that he would come quickly; and the book is concluded with a benediction usual in the epistles, especially in those of the apostle Paul, *ch.* 20, 21.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life Not baptism, which used to be administered in rivers and pools of water; and which engaged to purity of life; and the power and authority of administering which was from God and Christ; but in this Jerusalem-state there will be no use nor need of ordinances; for this chapter to *ch.* 6, belongs to the preceding chapter, and is a continuation of the same account, this being not a new vision; but a part of the former, which the same angel, as in chapter *xxi.* 9, proceeds to show to John: nor is the holy Ghost intended by this river, whose gifts and graces are sometimes for their plenty, purity, and quickening virtue compared to rivers of living water; and who is a pure and holy spirit, and proceeds from the Father and the Son: nor the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from the blessed God, and is the Gospel of Christ; and when purely and faithfully preached, is clear as crystal; and is the means of conveying spiritual life to men, and of supporting it in them: nor the ultimate joys of heaven, which may be called a river of pleasure, for the fullness and variety of delight; pure, and clear as crystal, for the holiness and perfect knowledge of that state; and be said to proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, being the free gift of God through Christ; but this state is not designed here: rather, therefore, by this river, is meant

the everlasting love of God, which may be compared to a river for its largeness and abundance, its height and depth, its length and breadth; and for the large displays of it in this state, when its waters will increase, and be a broad river to swim in, and be unpassable; and for the streams of it in election, redemption, vocation, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which make glad the city of God; and for the pleasure it yields, and the fruitfulness it gives to those who drink of it: it may be called a river of water of life, because in the present state of things it quickens such who are dead in trespasses and sins; revives the saints when dead and lifeless, supports their spirits, and is a cordial that preserves from fainting; it keeps and secures from dying the second death, and is the spring and source of eternal life; and that itself will last and flow for ever, it is ever-running water, it is everlasting love: and it may be said to be pure and

Clear as crystal] It being free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation, being real, hearty, and sincere, both in the Father and in Christ, of which the fullest proofs and demonstrations are given; and being clear of all motives and conditions in the creature, by which it might be influenced; and it engaging to purity and holiness of life and conversation; for the doctrine which brings the account of it, and the inward principle of grace, which is the fruit of it, and every discovery of it, have a tendency hereunto.

Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb] Not taking its rise from man's obedience, nor from his love to God, nor from his faith in Christ; for the love of God is prior to all these, and is the spring and cause of them, and therefore cannot be moved and influenced by them; but it has its origin from the sovereignty of God and of Christ, signified by the throne of both, who will be gracious to whom they will be gracious; nor can any reason be given why they love any of the sons of men, but their own sovereign will and pleasure; this is the sole motive, spring, and cause of their love; and God and the Lamb being mentioned together, shows both the equal dignity of their persons, being on the same throne, and the equality of their love to the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: and thus, as a river adds to the pleasure, use, conveniency, and wholesomeness of a city, this glorious city is commended by such a river running by it, or in the midst of it: there may be an allusion to the river which ran out of the garden of Eden, for this will be a paradisaical state, *Gen.* ii. 9, or rather to the waters in *Ezek.* xlvii. 1—5, which came from under the threshold of the sanctuary; though this river proceeds not from

from the temple, there being no temple in this state, but from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is instead of it.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

In the midst of the street of it] That is, of the city described in the preceding chapter, which shows that this vision belongs to that, and is a continuation of it, and which street was all of pure gold, chap. xxi. 21.

And on either side of the river, was there the tree of life] Not that it stood either in the midst of the street of the city, which being a pavement of gold, a tree could not well stand there; nor on both sides of the river, which is impossible, unless the tree of life is put for many trees of the same kind, as in Ezekiel's vision, to which the allusion is; and so some were on one side of the river and some on the other, as there; see chap. xlvii. 7, 12. or unless it can be thought that such a solution of the difficulty is sufficient, that the root of it was on one side, and the branches grew over to the other; though the words may be better rendered, and the difficulty will be removed, and the sense be clear, "between the street of it," the city, "and the river, on this side, and on that side;" that is, the street on one side, and the river on the other, was the tree of life; compare with this *John* xix. 18. So the Jews say (e), that the tree of life is in the midst of paradise, and its body covers all the garden; and that there is in it five hundred thousand different tastes; and that there is no likeness and smell like it. By the tree of life is meant not the Gospel, nor godliness, nor eternal life, nor any other of the divine persons, but Christ, who is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; see the note on chapter ii. 7. and situation between the street of the city, where the saints commune and converse together, and the river of God's everlasting love, which in this state will appear in its fullness and glory, shows that Christ will be seen and enjoyed by all in the most delightful and comfortable manner that can be wished for.

Which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month] Not one sort of fruit one month, and another sort another month, and so on, but twelve sorts every month; which is ex-

pressive of the fruits and spiritual blessings of grace from Christ, enjoyed by saints in the present state, and of that variety of happiness and pleasures to be had in this glorious state, and of the continuance of them; they being always ever-fresh and new, and will be always sufficient for the twelve tribes of the true Israel of God; and for all that have embraced the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; whose drink in this state will be the everlasting love of God, and whose food will be the fruit of the tree of life; both which they shall enjoy in great abundance.

And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations] Not for the curing of diseases, or repairing of health; which in the present state of things is done by the application of the blood of Christ for the pardon of sin, which is a healing of diseases, and by the discoveries of the love of God, through the ministration of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which might be thought to be signified by leaves; for there will be no disease either of body or mind in this state; besides, the nations that will walk in the light of this city, will be saved perfectly and completely, chap. xxi. 4, 24. but these leaves will be for the preserving and continuing the health of the people of God in this state, as the tree of life in Eden's garden was for the preservation of the health and life of Adam, had he continued in a state of innocence; and it denotes that every thing in Christ will contribute to the comfort, health, and happiness of the saints. The Jews interpret the passage in *Ezek.* xlvii. 12. to which this refers, of future time, or the world to come (f); and speak of various trees and herbs of great fragrancy and medicinal virtues, which grow quite round on the sides of a laver that stands in paradise (g).

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And there shall be no more curse] As there was in Eden, from whence a river came, and there was a tree of life; for there the serpent was cursed for his concern in man's transgression, and the earth on account of it; but in this new earth, and paradisaical state, and on the inhabitants of it, will be no curse; here will be no sin, the cause of the curse, nor pain and sorrow, nor death, corporal, spiritual and eternal, or the wrath of God, the several effects of sin, and parts of the curse; the curse of the law cannot here take place;

(e) Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1.

(f) Shishithirin Rabba, fol. 79. 1. (g) Seder Avotah Hakodesh, fol. 46. 1.

place; for besides the righteousness of Christ, which all in the new Jerusalem will be clothed with, and so be blessed and secure from the curse, they will be perfectly pure and holy in nature, and constant and compleat in their obedience and service; they will always do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; no accursed person, or any one devoted to ruin and destruction, will be here; not the old serpent, the devil, he will be shut up in the bottomless pit; nor the blasphemous beast and false prophet, they will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire before this time comes; no cursing, or accursed men will dwell here; not such who curse themselves, or the saints, or such who will be bid to depart as cursed, these will be destroyed in the general conflagration; nor will there be any anathema denounced against any person, for here will be no introducers of another Gospel, nor any that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ; nor will any be an anathema, or accursed from Christ, excommunicated from the church of Christ, for that will have no members deserving of that; none but what are pure and undefiled; see *Zech. xiv. 11.*

But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.] God himself will be there, his tabernacle will be among men; the name of this city will be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is here; the pure and spotless Lamb of God, the Son of the blessed, will be here, whose presence will make it an happy state; these will both have their throne, or seat here; they will sit on one throne, being the one God over all blessed for ever; this city will be the city of the great king, where his royal glory and majesty will be most illustriously displayed, and which will greatly make for the felicity of this state, and secure it from the curse.

And his servants shall serve him.] Either the angels, who are ministering spirits, and the servants of God and of the Lamb; or the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of the most high God; or rather all the true followers of Christ, who shall be where he is, and serve him; both God and the Lamb, who are one in nature, though two distinct persons; wherefore serving them both is not serving two masters: and the service the saints will be employed in, in this state, will not be preaching the word, or attending on the ministry of it, or subjecting to ordinances, which will now be at an end, but celebrating the praises of God, adoring the perfections of his nature, ascribing the glory of every providence, and of all salvation to him, and magnifying the riches of his grace; and this they will perform in the most spiritual, fervent, and perfect manner, and that continually; see chapter vii. 15.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And they shall see his face.] The face of God, so as he is not to be seen now; they shall see him as he is; not only the angels, who always behold the face of God, but all the saints, risen and changed, being pure in heart, and perfectly holy; they shall see him face to face, they shall have intimate and familiar communion with him; they shall enjoy his favour, and have the freest and largest discoveries of his love; and they shall see the face of the Lamb; they shall behold Christ and his glory, both with the eyes of their understanding, and with the eyes of their bodies; and this is a very desirable sight, and will be very glorious and delightful; it will be fully satisfying, and will make the saints like unto him; it will be free from all darkness and any interruption, and will always continue.

And his name shall be in their foreheads.] They shall be known to be his servants, as if his name was written and bore on their foreheads; it will be a clear case that they are the children and people of God; now they are, but it is not known, at least not so known as it will be in this state; and they will also in the fullest and freest manner own God to be their God, and the Lamb to be their redeemer; they will be under no fear of man, nor be under any temptation to be ashamed of Christ, or of his service; see chap. xiv. 1. Some think there is an allusion to the inscription on the mitre of the high-priest's forehead, *holiness to the Lord*, the saints being now openly, visibly, and perfectly holy.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And there shall be no night there.] This is repeated from chapter xxi. 25. to express the certainty of it, and to observe, that the happiness of this state will greatly lie in the light thereof; it will be one everlasting day, *αἰών αἰώνος*, day of eternity, or eternal day, as in 2 Peter iii. 18.

And they need no candle, neither light of the sun.] Neither artificial nor natural light; neither the dimmer light of the ceremonial law, under the legal dispensation, which was like a candle lighted up in Judea; nor the more clear light of the Gospel and its ordinances, under the present dispensation, which now will be at an end.

For

For the Lord God giveth them light] Immediately from himself, without the use of means and ordinances; and in his light the saints will see all things clearly; who will be always communicating it to them, and will be their everlasting light; see the note on chap. xxi. 23.

And they shall reign for ever and ever] They are made kings now, and in this state they shall reign with Christ for the space of a thousand years; and when they are ended, they shall not cease to reign; nor will Christ, when he delivers up the kingdom to the Father, for his and their kingdom is an everlasting one, chapters i. 6. and v. 10. and xx. 4. Dan. vii. 27. and here ends the account of this glorious state of things; what follows is the conclusion of the whole book.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

And he said unto me] That is, the angel that talked with him, and showed him the above things.

These sayings are faithful and true] Not only what are delivered in particular concerning the new Jerusalem-state, in which are many things new, and unheard of before, and which may seem strange, and even incredible, but all that are written in this book, y. 7, 18, 19. all which are faithful; to be believed by all that read them, and in the fulfillment of which the faithfulness of God is engaged and displayed: and they are true; for they come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, and are to be credited, and will have a certain accomplishment: this is said to secure the divine authority of this book against the gain-sayers of it, whom the holy Ghost foresaw would arise in the world; and which is here, and in the following part of this chapter, supported by the testimonies of Christ, of his angel, and of John his servant.

And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done] The Lord God is the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by comparing this with chapter i. 11. and this is a very glaring proof of the deity of Christ, since he is not only called the Lord God, but the Lord God of the holy prophets; of the prophets of the Old Testament, who foretold things to come, and spake of the Messiah, his person, office, sufferings, death, and the glory that should follow; and of the prophets of the New Testament, who had a gift of explaining

the prophecies of the Old, as well as some of them predicted future events; and both sorts were holy men, set apart by God for this office, and had principles of holiness wrought in them, and were moved by the holy Ghost; these Christ inspired, and qualified with gifts suitable to their work; and he is, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and the Oriental versions read, "the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets;" see 1 Cor. xiv. 32, who had power over their spirits, could come at them, and did impress them with a sense and knowledge of divine and future things, which none but God can do: the same sent an angel of his; one of his ministering spirits he has under his command, perhaps the same that here speaks, for so reads the Syriac version, "sent me his angel," to show to John, and by him to all the saints, and to all the servants and followers of the Lamb, things that were in a very little time to begin to come to pass, till all were fulfilled: and even those at the greatest distance were, and are to be fulfilled within a little time, with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and in comparison of eternity, and even of the time which had elapsed from the beginning of the world; and these things were shown in the various visions of the seals, trumpets, vials, and others; see chapter i. 1.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Behold, I come quickly] These are the words not of the angel, but of Christ, as is manifest from y. 12, 16, 20. and which are to be understood not of Christ's coming in his power to destroy Jerusalem, for this was past when John had these visions, and wrote this book; but of the second and personal coming of Christ to judgment, as is clear from y. 12. which though it will not be sooner than the time appointed, yet will be as soon as that time is come, and sooner than is generally expected by men. The Ethiopic version adds, "as a thief," as in chapter xvi. 15. and because the second coming of Christ is an affair of the utmost moment, and will be attended with events of the greatest consequence and importance, in which the visions of this book issue, a *behold* is prefixed to it, as a note of attention and admiration.

Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book] This book is a prophecy of things to come, and therefore cannot refer to the times of Jerusalem's destruction, which some interpreters make it chiefly to concern, for then it would

be a narrative of things past; the *sayings* of it are the things contained in it; to *keep* these sayings is to read them with observation, to take notice of the accomplishment of them, so far as it has taken place, to keep them in mind, and memory, to meditate upon them, and through the grace of God to steer the life and conversation according to the instructions, directions, and cautions here given; and such are blessed in life, and will be in death; they will die in the Lord, share in the first resurrection, and enter through the gates into the city.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

And I John saw these things and heard them] He was both an eye and an ear-witness; some things he saw, and others he heard; and to render his testimony the more authentic, he puts his name to it; and he being an apostle of Christ, and a man of great sincerity and probity, is to be believed.

And when I had heard and seen] The things related in this book, being amazed at them, and filled with joy on account of many of them, and firmly believing the whole as coming from God.

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things] This is the second time John did so, though warned of it, and rebuked for it, which shows the proneness even of good men to fall into sin again and again; and what a propensity there is in mankind to idolatry; and very likely this might be suffered, that a second reproof might be given, and repeated instructions be on record, to prevent the worshipping of angels, introduced in the first ages of christianity.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Then saith he unto me] The angel at whose feet John fell down to worship.

See thou do it not] This he said in great haste, and with much vehemence, to hinder him from doing it, as his short way of speaking shows.

For I am thy fellow-servant] Of God, and of Christ, and am no more the object of worship

than thyself; and both of us are, and ought to be, the worshippers of God, whose servants we are.

And of thy brethren the prophets] The apostles and ministers of the word; for prophesying and preaching are the same thing; these were the brethren of John in a spiritual sense, and by reason of their function.

And of them which keep the sayings of this book] See *7: 7.* and this is said to encourage the observation of them, and is the character of private christians, and shows the great condescension of the angel to put himself, not only upon a level with John, and the ministers of the word, but with common believers.

Worship God] And him only, and that in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear, in faith, and according to his revealed will; see the note on chapter xix. 10.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

And he saith unto me] Not the angel, but Christ, as is manifest from *7: 12, 13, 16, 20.* This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book] As the orders are, when things are intended not to be published, but concealed, at least as yet, because of the distance of the accomplishment of them, which was not the case here; see chapter x. 4. *Dan. viii. 26.* and chap. xii. 4, 9. Christ would have the things John saw and heard, written, and made public, and sent in an open book, unsealed, to the churches, that they might be seen and read of all; that so the afflictions and persecutions of the people of God, both under Rome pagan, and Rome papal, might be known, and the saints not be offended at them when they came, but be prepared for them, to endure them patiently; and that they might be apprized of the errors and heresies that were to spring up, and of the appearance and wickedness of the man of sin, and his followers, and beware of them; and that they might have some assurance of the destruction of antichrist, and of the glorious state of the church, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, and so be comforted in the midst of their tribulations, and rejoice in the faith and hope of these things. We may learn from hence, that the scriptures in general are not to be locked up, and concealed from the common people, but lie open, and are to be read by all; and in particular, that this book is not so dark and obscure as it is thought to be.

For

For the time is at hand] When the things in this book shall begin to be fulfilled; see chapter i. 1, 3.

11 *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still] These words are not to be considered as ironical expressions, such as in *Eccles. xi. 9. Isaiah l. 11.* much less as an allowance to do injustice and commit filthy actions; nor even as deterring persons from these things, by tacitly suggesting, that should they continue unjust and filthy, they would be severely punished; nor as an anticipation of an objection, that might be made against the publication of this book, and the sayings of it, taken from the ill use that some men might make of it, who might be provoked to injure and persecute the saints more and more, or indulge a filthy conversation; but as a prophecy of what would be at the close of time, at the second coming of Christ. The imperative is put for the future, as is usual in the Hebrew language, in which it is said, let such and such things be, when the sense is, that they shall be; see *Ezek. iii. 27. Zech. xi. 9.* and so the meaning of this expression is, he that is now found without a righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness, and acts unrighteously, will continue so; there will be no change made in him; no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he will remain the same wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow-creatures, will still do mischief; at least he will have the same inclination, though not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an instance in the wicked dead, when raised; see chapter xx. 8.

And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still] Or he shall be filthy still: all mankind are originally, naturally, and universally, filthy, or defiled with sin. Some are cleansed from it by the blood of Christ, others are not; and these will continue polluted, nor will the fire of hell fetch out the filthiness of their hearts and nature: or the words may be rendered, "he that defileth, let him defile still;" though he will not be able to defile the temple of God, or corrupt the good communications of the saints; yet he will continue to defile himself: the same evil thoughts, &c. will proceed out of him, as every which defile the man.

And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still] A truly righteous man is one that is righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; he is one, who by faith looks to Christ for righteousness, and receives it from him, and in consequence of it, lives soberly, righteously, and godly, and such will continue righteous; not that they will be made more righteous, though they may have a clearer view of their justification, for the sentence of it will be afresh pronounced upon them; but the meaning is, they will ever remain in a justified state, and never enter into condemnation, their righteousness being an everlasting one. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions read, and "the righteous man, let him do righteousness still;" as he will do, for such will ever be before the throne of God, and serve him in his temple day and night, chapters vii. 15. and xxii. 3.

And he that is holy, let him be holy still] They are holy who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and none but such will be admitted into the pure state of things upon Christ's second coming; and such will then be perfectly holy, and without sin, and shall continue so: hence we may learn, that justification and sanctification are two distinct things, and that both are durable. With these sayings may be compared some expressions of the Jewish doctors (*b*), as the sense of *Lev. xi. 43, 44.* "if a man defile himself a little, they defile him much; the Gloss on it is, they let, or suffer him to be more defiled; if below, they defile him above; if in this world, they defile him in the world to come; if a man sanctifies himself a little, they sanctify him much; if below, they sanctify him above; if in this world, they sanctify him in the world to come."

12 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

And, behold, I come quickly] This is repeated, to confirm the truth of Christ's second coming, and the speediness of it, and to point at the time when the above shall be, and to add what follows.

And my reward is with me] Which words are taken out of *Isaiah xl. 10.* and *lxii. 11.* and which being compared together, furnish out a clear proof of Christ being the true Jehovah, the eternal God. There is a reward of debt, or a

(b) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 1.

due reward, a reward of punishment, which is the just recompence of reward, which shall be righteously given to wicked men for their sin. *Heb.* ii. 2. *Isaiah* iii. 11. and there is a reward of grace, which is also called the recompence of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is no other than the gift of eternal life, which God of his free grace bestows upon his people, *Heb.* xi. 26. *Col.* iii. 24. and both these are with Christ; they are in his hands, he has authority from God, as mediator, to inflict vengeance on the wicked, and to give eternal life to his people; both which he will do, for this is with him.

To give every man according as his work shall be.] If his work is evil, and he is an unjust and filthy man, and the course of his conversation has been vicious, the reward of debt, or just punishment, will be rendered to him; but if his work is the fruit of grace, and he has had his conversation in the world by the grace of God, and he is a righteous person, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and a holy, good man, sanctified by the Spirit of God, the reward of grace, the crown of righteousness will be given to him.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

See the note on chap. i. 8. These characters are all put together here, which are before used in chapters i. 8, 11. and xxi. 6. and are very pertinently mentioned in this place, when all promises and prophecies, relating to the glorious kingdom of Christ, were just finishing, and that itself was ready to appear, in which Christ alone should be exalted, the mystery of God would be compleated, and time itself be no more. The Ethiopic version adds, "the beginning and end of days," or time. A testimony this, of the deity, eternity, infinity, and perfection of Christ.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Blessed are they that do his commandments.] Either the commandments of God, chapters xii. 17. and xiv. 12. the precepts of the moral law, which are the whole duty of man; which are done either legally, in order to obtain life, and then they must be perfectly done, which no man can do; hence none live, and are justified by the deeds of it, and consequently are not blessed, but cursed; or evangelically, when they are done in

the strength of Christ; from love to God, in the exercise of faith upon him, with a view to his glory, and without dependence on them, acknowledging the imperfection of them, and looking unto Jesus for righteousness and life, in whom such find both, and so are blessed persons: or else the commandments of Jesus are intended, who is speaking in the context, *χ.* 12, 13, 16. and is speaking of himself, and his, as the angel does in *χ.* 6. Christ's commandments are his new commandment of love, and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are to be observed in the same evangelical manner, as the commandments of God, and to be kept exactly as they are delivered, without any alteration, addition, or diminution; and they are to be attended to immediately, and without delay; and such as regard them in a right way and manner are blessed; they have much pleasure and delight in the observance of them; these commandments are not grievous, especially when they have the presence of Christ, the discoveries of his love, and are under the gracious influences of his Spirit: or it may be rather the commandments in this book are designed, for it may be rendered, "that do its commandments;" keep the sayings of this book, as in *χ.* 7. such as relate to the worship of God, and forbid the worship of the beast, which caution against idolatry, and exhort to come out of Babylon, and direct to follow the Lamb, and charge not to add or take from any thing written in this prophecy; and such persons as keep the words of it are pronounced blessed, chapter i. 3. The Alexandrian copy reads, "that wash their garments;" and so the Ethiopic version, and also the Vulgate Latin, which adds, "in the blood of the Lamb," agreeable to chap. vii. 13. and such whose persons and garments are washed in the blood of Christ are blessed indeed; they are justified by it, pardon through it, and both they and their services are accepted on account of it. The instances of their happiness follow,

That they may have right to the tree of life.] Or "power over the tree of life;" that is, Christ, not of government over him, but of enjoyment of him; a liberty of eating of the fruit of this tree, having interest in it, and so a right to partake of it; which right, or liberty, is not obtained by obedience to the commands of God, or Christ, or of this book, for this is what is due to God, and obligatory on men; and which, when done, is but their duty, and can merit nothing; though a cheerful and evangelical obedience to the divine will makes such appear to have a right to such a privilege, as the disciples of

of Christ are not made so, but appear to be such by bringing forth fruit, *John* xv. 8. but to have interest in Christ, the tree of life, and a right, power, and liberty to eat thereof, is a free grace gift, chapter ii. 7. and happy are those who enjoy such a privilege! *Prov.* iii. 18. *Cant.* ii. 3.

And may enter in through the gates of the city] The Ethiopic version reads, "into this holy city;" and which intends not entrance into a particular church of Christ, the way into which is faith in Christ, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism; nor entrance into heaven, which, as a Gospel-church, is often called a city, and into which none shall enter, but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and are regenerated by his Spirit, the gates of it are Christ and his grace; but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is meant, and entrance into that, which is so largely described in the preceding chapter, and particularly its gates; and they must be happy persons indeed, who enter there; and their right to it is from, and lies in Christ, his blood, righteousness, and grace, under a sense of which they yield a ready obedience to his will, which makes their right to appear. Frequent mention is made of the gates of this city in the book of *Zohar*: and, says R. Isaac (i), "when the soul, *נשמה בשערי*, 'is fit,' (or worthy, or has a right) 'to enter through the gates' of Jerusalem that is above, Michael the great prince goes with it, who anticipates for it the peace of the ministering angels, wondering at him, and enquiring concerning it, saying, *Who is this that comes out of the wilderness*, &c. *Cant.* iii. 6."

15 For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

For without are dogs] That is, without the holy city are such persons who are comparable to dogs for their filthiness, impudence, and voraciousness, as are persecutors, hereticks, and apostates, *Matt.* vii. 6. *Phil.* iii. 2. *2 Pet.* ii. 22. Some think Sodomites are intended, as in *Deut.* xxiii. 18. so Abarbinel and others interpret the law; and who abound in the Roman jurisdiction, called therefore Sodom, chapter xi. 8. and indeed all wicked men, who will be cast out into outer darkness, may be signified hereby. The Jews say (k), "when a man dies, if he be worthy (or righteous) he descends in the likeness of a

lion to receive his soul, but if not, in the likeness of a dog, concerning which David says, *Psal.* xxii. 20."

And forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters] Characters of the antichristian party, who will have no place in this city, or glorious kingdom of Christ; see the note on chapter xxi. 8.

And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie] Who loves both to invent and tell lies, and loves to hear them told by others; meaning more especially the doctrinal lies of antichrist, which are spoken in hypocrisy by him, and his followers are given up to believe.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

I Jesus have sent mine angel] As John, the writer of this book, sets down his own name, who was an eye and ear-witness of the things contained in it, that they might be more surely believed, *1. 8.* so Christ, the author of it, puts his name Jesus to it, to engage the greater attention to hear, and read, and keep the words of it, as well as to make it plain and manifest, who is plain and manifest, who is the person speaking of his coming, *1. 7, 12.* and who that has any value for Jesus the saviour, but will give credit, and pay a regard to this revelation of his, which he sent by his angel, one of his ministering spirits, made by him, and under his command, he being the creator, Lord, and head of angels: this expresses the dignity of his person, and is no inconsiderable proof of his deity: and this was done, in order

To testify] To bear witness to the truth of the things contained in it; to signify and shew them, to set them forth in emblems and visions.

Unto you these things in the churches] To the servants of the Lord, *1. 6.* to John, and by him to others, to the pastors of the seven churches, who were *over* the churches, as it may be rendered, and to the members of the churches, to all that were in them; for the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read *in*; the Syriac version renders it, *before* the churches." What John saw he wrote in a book, and sent it to these churches, chapter i. 11. The words may be rendered, "concerning the churches;" and then the sense is, that the angel was sent to shew to John, and by him to others, even to all the saints in all ages, the things relating to the church of Christ,

(i) Medrash Haneelam in *Zohar* in Gen. fol. 77. r.

(k) Rays Mebimna in *Zohar* in Num. fol. 95. 2.

in the several periods of time, represented in succession by the seven churches of Asia. Christ gives a further account of himself, for the greater confirmation of the faith of his people, in the certain accomplishment of the things herein written, by saying,

I am the root and the offspring of David] The former of these is mentioned in chapter v. 5. see the note there; and the meaning of it is, either that Christ, as God, is David's Lord and head, from whom he had his being, both in a temporal and spiritual sense, and by whom he was supported and sustained; or that, as man, he sprung from the root of David, or descended from him; and so it falls in with the latter, which may be explanative of it, *the offspring of David*; that is, the son of David, according to the flesh, a frequent name of the Messiah; see the note on *Matt. i. 1*. God promised that the Messiah should be of the seed of David, and according to his promise he raised up unto Israel of his seed, a saviour Jesus, the same person here speaking, *Acts xiii. 13*. who adds,

And the bright and morning star] Christ is compared to a *star*, as in *Numb. xxiv. 17*. for its light, the light of nature, and of grace, and of the new Jerusalem state being from him; and for its glory, his glory being the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and he having a glory, as mediator, which his saints will ever behold, and be delighted with: and for its influence, all the blessings of grace, life, and righteousness being from him; and to a *bright star*, because he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and so splendid, shining, and illustrious, that he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all; and to a *bright morning star*, which shows the night is going off, and the day is coming on, and is the Phosphorus, or bringer of light: as Christ by his first coming, who was then the day spring from on high, put an end to the night of Jewish darkness, and sprung the great Gospel-day, so often spoken of by the prophets, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and shewed the way to eternal life by himself; so by his second coming, to which this character refers, he will put an end to the night of anti-christian darkness, pagan, papal, and Mahometan; so that there shall be no more night, and shall make an everlasting day, and bring such light into the holy city, that it shall need no candle, nor light of the sun or moon. The dawn of light at the reformation was a presage of this, chapter ii. 28. called there the morning star. With great propriety and pertinence are these titles here assumed by Christ, as *the root and off-*

spring of David, or David's son, when he was about to sit on the throne of his father David, and possess his kingdom in the most visible and glorious manner; and *the bright and morning star*, when he was going to usher in such light into the new Jerusalem, as would make all other light unnecessary. *Micheah Shabar*, in the title of *Psalms xxii.* which is a psalm that belongs to the Messiah, is, by some Jewish writers (¹), interpreted, כוכב הבוקר, "the morning star," the title of Christ here.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come] Hearing Christ say that he should come quickly, *7. 12*. the Spirit and the bride express an earnest wish, and a most affectionate desire after his coming; by *the Spirit* may be meant the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, who not only convinces them of, and acquaints with the coming of Christ to judgment, and gives them reason to expect it, but fills their souls with the love of his appearance, so that they look and long for it, and hasten in the breathings of their souls after it: and this in like manner he may be said to wish for, and desire it in them, as he is said to cry *Abba*, Father, in them, *Gal. iv. 6*. and to make intercession for them, *Rom. viii. 26, 27*. Hence some interpreters, by the Spirit, understand such as have the Spirit, and are spiritual men; either have spiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, as John, who in *7. 20*. expresses an ardent desire that Christ would come quickly; or regenerate men in common, who are born of the Spirit, and bear his name, *John iii. 5, 6*. and so by an Hendyadis, *the Spirit and the bride* signify one and the same; namely, the spiritual bride of Christ, who is sanctified by the Spirit of God; even all the elect of God, whom Christ loved from all eternity, and who are espoused to him as a chaste virgin; the new Jerusalem, who is as a bride adorned for her husband, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife: these wait for the bridegroom's coming, and most earnestly desire it, as there is good reason for them so to do, since his appearing in itself will be a glorious one, being in his own glory, and his Father's, and the holy angels; and seeing then will be the solemnization of the marriage-day between Christ and

(1) Apud Kimchi in loc.

and his church; it will be the faints redemption-day; they will then possess full salvation in soul and body; compleat grace will be given to them, and glory will be revealed in them, and they shall be for ever with the Lord.

And let him that beareth] What the Spirit and the bride say; or the words of this prophecy; or that has spiritual ears given him, and he hears so as to understand spiritual things, the kingdom of Christ, and the glories of it, let him join the Spirit and bride, and

Say, Come] Likewise; or express his wishes and desires in the same earnest and affectionate manner, that Christ would hasten his second coming.

And let him that is athirst come] These seem to be the words of Christ inviting such who thirst after him, his grace and righteousness, after more knowledge of him, and communion with him, to come unto him, by faith, and partake thereof, *John vii. 37.* or who thirst after his second coming, and the glories and delights of the new Jerusalem state, to come into it, and eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it; for the character seems to design such, to speak in the language of the Jews, who use like phrases with this, who hunger, *וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ נִשְׁמָה*, "and thirst to drink living water (*m*)", as appears by what follows.

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely] The *water of life* designs the free favour and love of God, and the communications and displays of it in the new Jerusalem state, even the comfort, refreshment, and glories of that state: to take it is to enjoy it, to partake of it, being led unto it, and that being given to them by Christ the Lamb in the midst of the throne, chapters vii. 17. and xxi. 6. and which is had freely, without money, and without price, as in *Isaiah lv. 1.* which seems to be referred to; for the happiness of this state, as well as eternal life, is the free gift of God through Christ; and the persons encouraged to partake of it, are, *whosoever will*; that is, whoever has a will to divine and spiritual things, wrought in him by God, for no man has such a will of himself, *Phil. ii. 13.* though this does not so much regard the character of the person, that may take of the water of life, as the free manner in which he may take it: so the Jews are wont to express themselves, when they would signify the liberty that might be used, or the free way in which any thing might be taken, particularly when

speaking of the law, and the things of it, *וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ נִשְׁמָה*, "whosoever has a mind to take, let him come and take," as it is said, *Isa. lv. 1. be, every one that thirsteth, &c.* that is, he is free to take, he is welcome to it; which passage referred to, is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, *וְהָאֵלֶּיךָ נִשְׁמָה*, "whosoever will" learn, "let him come and learn, &c."

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

For I testify unto every man] These are not the words of a scribe, who having wrote out a copy of this book, added the following adjuration to it, to deter persons from adding to it, or diminishing it; for the book is not yet finished, and both Christ and John speak after this; and to insert such a passage into the text, would be a bold and daring action; nor are they even the words of John, the inspired writer of it, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, as appears from *Y. 16, 17, 20.* who in a most solemn manner declares to every man, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever character, or however dignified, either in a civil or ecclesiastic way,

That beareth the words of the prophecy of this book] Read, or explained.

If any man shall add unto these things] To add to the things contained in this book, is not to deliver, or write an exposition of it, in a modest manner, with a sincere view to give light into it, agreeable to the analogy of faith; for to expound scripture, or to preach from it, consistent with it, is not to add unto it, but to give the sense of it; but then may it be said to be added unto, and so this book, when it is wrested and perverted, and a false gloss is put upon it, as the Pharisees did upon the law; and when unwritten traditions are made to be equal to it, or above it, as the same persons made the traditions of the elders, whereby they transgressed the law, and made the word of God of none effect, and so broke through the precept given, *Deut. iv. 2.* as do the papists in like manner; and when men pretend to visions and revelations, and make them the rule of faith and practice, and to confirm things that are neither in this book, nor in any other part of the word of God; and when

(m) Rashi, fol. 31. 2.

(n) *Shulchan Aruch*, c. 41. *Tierce*, *Hammer*, fol. 79. 4. & 82. 4. *Yalkut Simeoni*, par. 2. fol. 54. 3. & 100. 2.

men interpolate it; and set up human fictitious writings upon equal authority with it; which shows the authenticity of this book, and of all the whole scripture, and the perfection of it, whose canon is closed with it: the punishment of such a crime follows,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.] The things threatened to the anti-christian party, chapters ii. 22, 23. and xiii. 10. and xiv. 9—11. the seven last plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, which will be inflicted on the same, chapter xvi. the lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast, the false prophet, the devil, and all wicked men will be cast, chapters xix. 20. and xx. 10. and xxi. 8. see *Prov. xxx. 5, 6.*

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy.] As he may be said to do, who denies the authority of this book, which has been done by some, and which the holy Ghost foresaw; or takes it away from, or denies the reading of it to the people, as the Papists do with respect to the whole scripture; and who wilfully pervert the sense of it, and will not have the things in it, relating to antichrist, to belong to him.

God shall take away his part out of the book of life.] By which is meant eternal election, which is the meaning of the phrase throughout this book, in which whoever are written, shall certainly be saved. The worshippers of the beast, or the anti-christian party, who are chiefly regarded here, are not written in it, chapters xiii. 8. and xvii. 8. wherefore taking away the part of such, is only taking away that which they seemed to have; see *Luke viii. 18.* and the sense is, that such shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, and will be the portion of all that are not written in the book of life, chapter xx. 15. The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, and the Complutensian edition, read, "the tree of life;" and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the sense is the same; see *John xv. 2.*

And out of the holy city.] The new Jerusalem, before described, a part in which is a right to enter into it through the gates, and possess the

glories of it: what is mentioned here, is only a seeming one, which wicked men may flatter themselves with; and the meaning is, that such shall never enter into it, and enjoy the happiness of it, but shall ever be without; chapters xxi. 27. and xxii. 15.

And from the things which are written in this book.] The blessings promised to the overcomers in chapters ii. and iii. which such as detract from this book shall have no share in. The Alexandrian copy, with some others, and the Syriac version, leave out the copulative *and*, and read "which are written," &c. connecting them with the book of life, and holy city, which are written, and spoken of, in this book. The Ethiopic version connects the words with the holy city, only reading them, "which is written," &c. The Jews say of their Talmud, that nothing is to be added to it, or diminished from it (a).

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

He which testifieth these things.] Not the angel, *1. 16.* nor John, who sometimes used this way of speaking, *John xxi. 24.* but Christ, as appears from what follows; for he

Saith, Surely I come quickly.] Who not only asserts the speediness of his coming, as in *1. 7, 12.* but expresses the certainty of it, so that it ought not to be doubted of by any, especially by his own people; though it may seem to be deferred, and upon that account, be derided by ungodly men; and Christ may have some respect in this strong repetition of it, to the certainty of the punishment that will then be inflicted upon such who add to, or diminish from this book; for he himself will certainly come in person, and execute the vengeance threatened. John next puts his

Amen.] To it, signifying his assent unto it, declaring his faith in it, and expressing his earnest desire after it, and wish for it: and in words at length adds,

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.] Quickly, speedily, as thou hast said, and in all thy glory; set up thy kingdom; let that come, introduce thy people into it, and destroy thine enemies; this he said as one that loved the appearance of Christ, longed for it, hastened to it, and was impatient at the delay of it.

21 The

(a) *Gens. Trenchard David, par. 1. fol. 34. 1.*

This Day is Published,

PROPOSALS

For PRINTING by SUBSCRIPTION,

A New and Elegant EDITION, in TEN VOLUMES,

Large QUARTO,

WITH SCRIPTURE MAPS AND PRINTS,

OF AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE WHOLE

OLD TESTAMENT,

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL,

By JOHN GILL, D.D.

(Uniform with the Author's EXPOSITION of the NEW TESTAMENT:)

IN WHICH IS GIVEN

A Correct Copy of the Sacred Text; an Account of the several Books, and the Writers of them; A Summary of each Chapter, and the genuine Sense of every Verse: And throughout the Whole the Original Text and the various Versions are compared, Interpreters of the best Note, both Jewish and Christian, consulted, difficult Places explained, seeming Contradictions reconciled, and various Passages illustrated and confirmed by Testimonies of Writers, Gentile as well as Jewish.

AND CONTAINING

I. The Original of Mankind, of the several Nations of the World, and of the Jewish Nation in particular.

II. The Lives of the Patriarchs of Israel.

III. The Journey of the Israelites from Egypt through the Wilderness to the Land of Canaan, and their Settlement in that Land.

IV. Their Laws, Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial.

V. Their Government and State under Judges and Kings; their several Captivities; and their sacred Books of Devotion.

VI. A Copious Exposition of the Books of the Prophets, both larger and lesser, shewing that they chiefly belong to Gospel-Times, and a great Number of them to Times yet to come.

VII. A Dissertation on the several Apocryphal Writings.

Number I. of the NEW TESTAMENT, with a fine Head of the Author, is published as a Specimen, (Price 6d) and may be returned if not approved of: And the whole NEW TESTAMENT is now finished. As soon as such a sufficient Number of Subscribers have sent their Names to GEORGE KEITH, Bookseller, in Gracechurch-Street, or W. OLIVER, Printer, in Bartholomew-Close, as to encourage the Printing of the Work, a Number will be published every Week, (containing Three Sheets) till the Whole is finished.

PROPOSALS may be had of the above Bookfeller and Printer; and of every Printer, Bookfeller, and News-Man in Town and Country.

